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BURGON

SOME REMARKS ON ART
WITH REFERENCE TO THE
STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY



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Benjamin

"A rose is a rose is a rose,"

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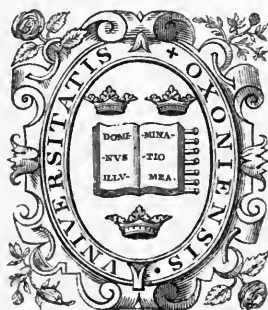
C. K. OGDEN

Disce, docendus adhuc quæ censet amicus ; ut si
Cæcus iter monstrare velit, tamen aspice, si quid
Et nos, quod eures proprium fecisse, loquamur."

HORAT. *Ep.* i. 17, 3—5.

SOME REMARKS ON ART
WITH REFERENCE TO
THE STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY.

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO
THE REV. RICHARD GRESWELL, B.D.,
TUTOR (LATE FELLOW) OF WORCESTER COLLEGE,
BY JOHN WILLIAM BURGON, B.A.,
OF WORCESTER COLLEGE.



OXFORD:
FRANCIS MACPHERSON.

—
1846.

Imitation of Horace, Ep. i. 17., 3—5.

By an Anonymous hand.

Just give me leave,—(although I don't pretend
Much wit myself,)—to counsel, as a friend.
Blind as a bat, I own :—a mere B.A. ;
And your own pupil, Sir, 'till yesterday ;
And yet,—who knows ?—in what has here been writ,
With all its want of learning, method, wit,
Something there *may* be, pertinent and true ;
Well worth the notice of the Dons and you !

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SOME REMARKS ON ART,

ETC.

MY DEAR MR. GRESWELL,

I WISH to offer a few remarks on the subject of Art, in connection with this University : its importance in a place consecrated to liberal studies : the great neglect under which it labours : and the possible means of giving it a larger share of the attention to which it seems so well entitled :—and I know of no one here to whom those remarks can be addressed with so much propriety as to yourself. Independent of all feelings of respect for your learning, and gratitude for your friendship, the circumstance of your having written a paper in 1843, “On Education in the Principles of Art,” and advocated its claims before the Ashmolean Society, would have been sufficient to guide me to *you*.

I am well aware that owing to the distance between our respective positions in this place, much that would command respect and attention from you, whose office it is to teach, would be wholly unimportant from me,—whose business (and inclination) is only to learn. *You*

are at liberty to complain of "a positive and notorious defect in our system of education," where silence would best befit *me*. However; such an admission on your part has all the force of a sanction of the present endeavour: and the same kind indulgence which so readily gave me permission to address these remarks in the quarter I desired, will, I am inclined to believe, readily acquit me of any unbecoming feelings in approaching such a question. It is hoped that others, to whom their author is unknown, will not misinterpret him. Those whose nature it is to feel warmly and strongly, often, half-unconsciously, express themselves warmly and strongly too. Hence one often seems to dictate, when one desires only to suggest: to be laying down a law, when one merely seeks to interpret a law already existing—though not generally recognised, because it is unwritten. If some competent person would have taken the subject into serious consideration, it would have been very agreeable to me to remain silent: but not only does no one come publicly forward, but (so far as my limited opportunities have enabled me to observe), the subject is scarcely ever so much as mooted among us: or if it be, it is quickly suffered to drop. It seems admitted, by tacit consent, that we are not well-read in Art; and one observes that really learned and intelligent men, (with a degree of modesty which one cannot but secretly admire and wish to imitate), shrink from discussions where both the Opponent and the Respondent are in the dark; or, to say the least, see their way but indistinctly. In some places men write and talk with increased volubility, proportioned to their deficiency of real acquaintance with the subject under consideration; but it certainly is not the case here.

As for these remarks being written in any undutiful spirit, or suggested by any inclination to find fault with one's elders and betters, it is too absurd a suspicion, I should hope, to enter any one's head : and so I shall take no pains to refute it. The deep, the unspeakable obligations every man owes to Oxford, who has had the blessing of being educated within her walls, can inspire him with none but affectionate feelings towards her. If an intense liking for her and for her system, and an ardent desire to see her great and good in every way (as she is great and good in most ways), be undutiful and reprehensible,—then indeed (but I trust not otherwise), reprehensible and undutiful I am, and hope ever to remain.....And after these few remarks, it is hoped that it will be sufficiently clear why I shall abstain in what follows from noticing our *relative* position ; why I do not inquire whether our neighbours may not be as behindhand as ourselves ; for this seems quite the wrong way to seek for improvement, whether in morals or any other department. If it shall appear that we *are* deficient, and that something may easily be achieved to supply our deficiency, it seems to me that we are possessed of all the facts we require : and whatever want of knowledge may be betrayed by him who shall venture to point out that deficiency,—whatever want of ability manifested in suggesting that remedy,—it is not too much perhaps to hope that the zeal which prompted the endeavour may inspire some sympathy, though it may fail to carry entire conviction : and so, indirectly at least, be attended with that success, which, in abler hands, so good a cause must have commanded, infallibly and immediately.

The absence of all Enthusiasm for Art, alluded to just

now, as generally evidenced among us in conversation, seems painfully reflected on the external features of our University. I am not of course speaking of *all* Art. I do not allude to Architecture. I am well aware that we inhabit a city of palaces. You will have readily understood my allusion, from the first, to be to specimens of the other arts of design, as Sculpture, Painting, and the like. With the exception of the venerable collection of Elias Ashmole, we possess nothing which is called a "Museum." True indeed it is that Ashmole's was the *first* Museum in England : that the first actual step was taken in *Oxford* ; but we seem to have stood still (in *this* department) for about two hundred years. We have added little to the (so-called) objects of *virtù* brought together by the taste and antiquarian feeling of that "fine old English gentleman." Indeed, his Museum *now* derives its chief interest from that very circumstance,—I mean its unchanged character. It is a genuine specimen of an old English collection ; such as Sir Henry Wootton, or Sir Samuel Pepys, or Mr. John Evelyn, or the Founders of the Royal Society would have delighted in. It is, for the most part, a collection of relics. There you have a glove which was worn by Mary Queen of Scots, and the uncomfortable shoe which belonged to John Bigge the hermit of Dynton ; the state-sword which the Pope gave to Henry the eighth, and a lock of Edward the fourth's hair ; King Alfred's jewel, and a pair of bellows that belonged to Charles the second ; an ancient peg-tankard (presented by Sir C. Pegge), and a pair of nutcrackers dated 1574. This enumeration of objects, I trust I need not say, is made with no wish to cast ridicule on a delightful old collection, and which in fact contains many objects of a higher order than these ;

objects deserving far more attention than they commonly meet with. But after all, it is scarcely too much to say that the Ashmolean is but a collection of *curiosities*. With all respect for the portraits of the Tradescant family on the stairs, and that of the Dodo in the entrance hall, it must be allowed that it contains very little deserving the name of Art. For Art then, where shall we turn? Probably to the Bodleian picture-gallery,—which is indeed a charming place to lounge in; and where about ten out of two hundred and forty-five pictures are agreeable specimens of painting. No. 128 (by Reynolds) and No. 160 (a portrait of Garrick), for instance, are worth visiting as works of art;* and are as superior to the rest, as the angel over the pulpit in St. Mary's is superior to the other thirteen angels in the same church:†—but the pictures in the Bodleian, (generally speaking), are only *curiosities*. Stiff portraits of cadaverous Scholars, and portentous Founders, and quaint old worthies of all sorts—with their coats-of-arms above, and an inscription (in gilt letters on a black ground) below;—memorials which disarm criticism indeed; nay, make one thrill, I should hope, with a thousand nobler emotions than the very best Claude ever inspired: but which, after all, as *works of art* are—I was almost going to say—beneath notice. And so, after glancing with pleasure at the beautiful models disposed

* Since this was written, there has been a transfer of about seventy pictures from the Bodleian to the Taylor Gallery. The Reynolds however remains, and is now No. 97. It is well worth a visit. It seems by far the most precious *work of art* in the collection. The absorbed look of the boy is very striking. What a pity it is that so fine a painting should be allowed to hang so high!

† That exquisite little figure must be looked at from the undergraduates' gallery to be appreciated.

along the room, we may suppose our stranger in Oxford to have taken leave of the Bodleian.

Whither then is he to direct his steps? Must he wander from chapel to chapel, and hall to hall, and library to library; keeping a careful record as he goes along of a curious piece of monumental sculpture here, or a fine portrait there; a good cast from the antique in a third place, and perhaps a few valuable paintings hanging in solitary beauty and obscurity in a fourth? Nay, this is scarcely legitimate. It is perhaps fairer to admit that he must look elsewhere for the *Art* of the university; and the determination to do so, will perhaps strike him at the eastern end of Broad-street,—in full view of the twelve astonishing heads which encircle the Theatre. There is an indescribable pathos in those twelve dreary faces which must have paralysed many a beholder;—but it is to be feared, rather with wonder than admiration. They seem placed there practically to illustrate the close connexion which subsists between the sublime and the ridiculous: and so we may suppose a stranger will think as he pursues his search in the direction of the Radcliffe Library. On entering that beautiful edifice he may well feel grateful to the elegant taste and liberality of the Messieurs Duncan who have added to its treasures the ornament of casts from seven of the first statues of antiquity. The same edifice contains a few other fine casts: yet how very few! The two marble candelabra with which it was enriched by Sir Roger Newdigate deserve to be particularly noticed: nor would it be dutiful to forget the anxiety of that old knight to keep alive in the University a taste for ancient “Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture;”—though the specimens he has left of his

own judgment in these matters* forcibly remind one of the grotesque period at which he lived : when Othello, for example, was tolerated on the stage in a scarlet coat and full-bottomed wig ; and when such vagaries as those of Horace Walpole at Strawberry-Hill, were considered true specimens of the sublime.

I desire to recollect all that we possess in the way of works of art, lest I may seem unfair on Oxford: and accordingly close my catalogue with the mention of the Pomfret marbles,—till now, deposited in a room in the Schools; and guarded, be it observed, by a shilling barrier,—which it may be questioned if many persons were tempted to surmount. That collection, accordingly, which exhibited an effort made a hundred years ago to dignify this seat of learning with specimens of the antique, and which was thus, in a certain sense, the most important depository of Art in Oxford,—had become one of the most unknown and insignificant of its sights. Nor can one wonder that it was rarely visited; possessing as it *did* all the dissuasives, and few of the attractions of antiquity. Its very grim and fearfully mutilated gods and goddesses always reminded me of a story told by Mr. Combe, the late keeper of the antiquities in the British Museum. A Lady of rank requested him to show her the treasures in his custody. He complied. “And now, Mr. Combe,” she said, when the exhibition was concluded, “we will go and see the Elgin marbles.”—“I have just had the

* Sir Roger’s house at Arbury is described to me by a friend as “a curious yet pleasing mixture of classic and gothic, and containing an old museum something like the Ashmolean. The antique statues are placed in decorated niches; and there is a clere-story to (I think) the dining-room. Sir Roger” he adds, “has adapted an old tomb to serve as a chimney piece in University-College Hall.”

honour of explaining them to your ladyship.”—“What? *Those* the Elgin marbles!—why really one sees so many *crippled objects* in the streets, that one hardly cares to see them cut out in marble, Mr. Combe.” And in truth it requires a considerable education to relish a mutilated work of ancient art. The first impression is very often of a ridiculous kind: hence perhaps the suspicion with which the raptures of the antiquary are sometimes regarded. It is hard at first to conceive that what makes *us* laugh should make *him* kindle with enthusiasm. Yet the experience of some branch of polite study with which we are ourselves familiar, —music, —poetry, —painting, —should convince us that the fault lies in us and not in him. These remarks are not quite irrelevant. The Pomfret marbles might almost as well *not* have been, as been where and what they were. The room was dark, and crowded with “crippled objects.” The number of supplementary noses, arms, fingers, etc., passed all bounds. To the best of my remembrance, the statues themselves were not only for the most part exceedingly inferior specimens, but disposed in the most inartificial way imaginable. Even an experienced eye scarcely knew what to be *at* when it got in. An inexperienced person must have longed to get out.

It is high time to remark that in the preceding examination of works of art in Oxford, the Arundel collection, —which is by far the greatest treasure we possess,—has been passed over, simply because it is a collection of ancient Greek *Inscriptions*; and these, however transcendent in point of interest, scarcely come within the terms of our inquiry. Yet it may be permitted me most sincerely to deplore the forlorn plight in which those relics, of which we ought to be so proud, are allowed to lie.

Why are they not drawn forth from the desolate apartment where they have been so long kept under lock and key, and exposed to the public gaze? It must surely be felt, that if we are so immensely behind our continental neighbours in antiquarian lore, it is in a manner our own fault. We seem unconscious of our deficiencies; and even when they are in part supplied, we turn the key on the treasures entrusted to our stewardship. Every foreign student indeed who visits Oxford does obtain an interview with the Arundel marbles: but it is to be feared that many of our own graduates leave *Alma Mater*, aware of nothing beyond the bare fact of their existence.

Such seems no unfair review of our repositories of works of Art. As for what precious prints may lie hid in *this* portfolio, or curious drawings in *that*: what choice carvings may be here, or cabinet of coins there,—I do not of course inquire. There *are* such things, I know. We all know too, that no respectable applicant who really wishes to see any or all of them, need go away disappointed. All that is intended, amounts to this,—that if a person wishes to pass an hour in the study of such works as we have been alluding to, he is at a loss to know in what direction to bend his steps.

These then, till very lately, were our resources: and the stranger whom we have been supposing in quest of the *καλόν*, when he had visited the several haunts enumerated, might be considered to have seen all that Oxford had to show in the way of repositories of Art. This, however, would be a true supposition no longer. It is now about two years since a succession of covered wagons were to be seen slowly moving in procession in the direction of the newly erected Taylor gallery. What they could possibly contain was a mystery, and gave rise to

much ingenious speculation. For my own part, I was struck with what looked like an enormous ostrich's egg emerging from the canopy of one of the wagons; which however on closer inspection proved—not to belong to a bird's nest, but—to be the apex of a statue;—the bald head of somebody whom Chantrey had immortalised. When the canopy was in part removed, a succession of gamboge-coloured personages were brought to light,—standing, sitting, reclining,—the whole length of the vehicle. An imaginative person would have fancied that he beheld the deities of old Rome (A. U. C. 365) on their road to Cære; but which had lost their way, and by some unaccountable accident, blundered into Beaumont-street.

Since the period alluded to, those statues—which proved to be the plaster casts of Sir. F. Chantrey's works,—have been housed in the best apartment of the Taylor gallery. They have long since been divested of their “orange-tawny” complexion: mounted on bases: and disposed in order throughout the apartment. They have indeed been very tastefully finished off, and placed as advantageously as was feasible: but they are, after all, the things they were. They are but the contents of Chantrey's *atelier*: and such as they are, they are the principal feature of attraction in the Taylor gallery. A stranger who should visit Oxford *now*, would naturally guide his footsteps thither, as to a depository of works of art; and would infer that the objects in question were of such an order of excellence as to satisfy the requirements of the University.

That persons of a cultivated taste among us should feel really satisfied with these statues, is too absurd to be for an instant supposed: but that they have been admitted

into the principal apartment in a structure consecrated to the Fine Arts—that they entirely fill that apartment—and are disposed as if they were intended to remain there for ever,—is a plain matter of fact: and it seems no unfair inference from this circumstance, that the full extent of the responsibilities which the possession of an empty gallery has entailed upon the University, has not been fully appreciated. *Who* the persons are, to whose taste and liberality we must hereafter look for the wise appropriation of the vacant edifice, I have very studiously refrained from inquiring. I was afraid lest respect, or partiality, when I came to be told of admired and honoured names, might impose a painful silence on me, or blind my judgment. As it is, these remarks may be penned with entire freedom. My eyes are fixed solely on that new structure, and on those modern monumental statues. In the former, I recognise an opportunity at last presenting itself,—late enough, but still in time,—for securing to ourselves a most important advantage: in the latter, I see a heavy blow aimed at those fair prospects. Let me at once declare that I deprecate in the strongest terms the admission of those casts into our public gallery; and augur most mournfully of the prospects of an Institution commenced under such miserable auspices. But this is writing vaguely. Such general condemnation of works which, in proper place, and at proper time, have been so long, (and I cheerfully add, so justly) admired, can carry no conviction. Give me leave, then, to offer a few remarks which may assist us in coming to the conclusion that we must resolutely entreat the authorities of this Institution to remove the statues in question, and substitute something of a very different kind in their room. *You* I am sure will bear with me if, in attempting to discuss an

interesting question, I venture to go back a little, and to begin as it were at the beginning.

I would observe then, that here in Oxford where everything is done for the education of the Heart and of the Understanding, nothing seems to be done for the education of the Eye. Perhaps it would be a more correct way of making the same remark to say,—that in the Moral and Intellectual education which a man here receives, no account is taken of the possibility of materially influencing both natures by physical means: of giving a high and holy impress to the one, and aiding the correct development of the other. The solicitude of those by whom the main outline of our scheme of education was mapped out, to purify the heart and sanctify the understanding, is written in such legible characters on the system daily pursued within these walls, that it cannot be mistaken. Withholding only the foremost place from those sciences which deal exclusively with Quantity and Number, they have substituted in their room, as the student's primary concern, the science of Ethics—sacred and profane. They have assigned to Logic so prominent a station, because they have regarded it not as a mere art of argumentation, to ensure victory in the war of words; but as a test of the reasoning process itself, and a severe discipline of thought. The course of Religious instruction, elementary as it must necessarily be in a system which proposes to prepare men alike for the duties of the senate, of the bar, and of the pastoral Office—is of such a kind as rather to impress young men with the Beauty of Holiness than to set them on speculations about the evidences of Religion: and it seems the object of the ancient History and Poetry, which form so large a part of our concern, to exercise the understanding, to enlarge the sympathies, to cultivate and

purify the taste. The entire course of study when viewed in retrospect seems intended as a broad groundwork, on which the student may rear his future structure with safety. Much indeed this is; more, it may be, than any of us are fully aware of: but it seems scarcely presumptuous to express one's conviction that it might easily be made much more still. These pursuits, as already remarked, are all of an abstract kind; and from their very nature must often be the *indirect* way of obtaining knowledge. The eye remains wholly uneducated. And is this because Form and Colour have nothing to do with education? Some one will perhaps gruffly answer—"Yes." But is it likely that this should be a true answer? Two of the affections of bodies—Number and Quantity—are deemed sufficiently important to constitute *the principal feature* in the education of the sister University: a high place too they enjoy in our own system. Is it not somewhat extraordinary that two other, equally inseparable, affections of bodies,—Form and Colour—should constitute, in neither place, *any* part of education at all?

Something like the answer which might be returned to this interrogatory can be readily anticipated; and I trust it will soon appear that I am not such a visionary as to suppose that the three or four years a young man passes at College is the proper season for perplexing him with the theory of Colour; or to claim his serious attention, as a matter of academical requirement, to Form,—either abstractedly or in the concrete. This, we are well aware, would be not only unwise, but wholly impracticable. In suggesting two such important subjects however, as instruments of education, it must be readily conceded that it may at least deserve some consideration to what extent they may be made available. They sound like shadowy

College Tutors I grant; but in some of their many concrete shapes, as statues or pictures, who will deny that they might be made conducive to this high object? They would at all events make their appeal to the heart and understanding immediately through the eye; and so become an object for many unconscious sympathies and indefinite longings, and a help to many purer and better thoughts. But besides all this, as will be soon shewn, they might be made useful in a direct and obvious manner.

It may be allowed me to suggest, in passing, that something of that humanising influence which the study of Music effected for the youth of Athens in their educational course, seems capable of being achieved for ourselves by the introduction of a kindred feeling—a taste for the Arts of Design. For many centuries, Music was regarded by ourselves no less than by the ancients,* as an indispensable branch of liberal study; but unhappily, for many a long year this science has been disregarded (in England) as an instrument of education. I say *unhappily*; for the heart is what it was: its needs are the same: and those needs have been fully felt, and frequently insisted upon. In Plato's beautiful description of Athenian education, he explains the office of poetry and music in forming the character of youth;—*ἵνα ἡμερώτεροί τε ᾧσι, καὶ εὐρυθμότεροι καὶ εὐαρμοστότεροι γιγνόμενοι, χρήσιμοι ᾧσιν εἰς τὸ λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν*: and sums up with the remark,—*πᾶς γὰρ ὁ βίος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εὐρυθμίας τε καὶ εὐαρμοστίας δεῖται*.† —This, however, is but taking one view of the subject,—

* My dear brother (the Rev. Henry J. Rose) has called my attention to a series of Treatises by S. Augustine on the great branches of Education, or Seven liberal Sciences; of which those on *Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, and Music* are still extant.—This series appears to be the earliest instance of the class of books called *Encyclopædias* in the middle ages.

† *Protagoras*, p. 326 B.

regarding *μουσική* namely, as a discipline; and it perhaps may be thought that if the non-cultivation of Music be a defect in our system, the substitution of the Arts of Design would be, to say the least, a mere experiment: that Music should be restored if Music be wanted: and that if such observing and sagacious persons as the ancients had thought the contemplation of Art desirable, they would not have omitted to supply the young with such objects for contemplation. All this however is not quite true. We have already said that we desire to see Music restored to its accustomed place of honour; but it would not answer all the ends we have in view, for many plain reasons. The ancients moreover were spared the necessity of introducing works of art to the notice of their youth; for the cities of antiquity, (Athens in particular, which was the University of the civilized world till the latter end of the sixth century—when its temples were converted into churches, and its schools finally closed), were full, to overflowing, of works of art. Other reasons will be soon added, further shewing the unfairness of the comparison. It may be assumed then, that the education of the Ear, however desirable, would not supply the place of the education of the Eye, nor supersede the necessity for it.

Persons who are zealously attached to things as they are, and who dread all innovation,—among whose respectable number let me ever find a place,—will naturally object to this, that it looks like advocating a novelty,—recommending the introduction of a new, and as yet untried element into education. The proper subject of study, say they, are *the works of ancient authors*. It has been the practice of the civilised world from time immemorial to lay these before the young,* and it may well be

* See Plato's description of the employments of a school in his day, *Protag.* p. 325 D.—The passage is too interesting to

assumed to be the right method. Now, all this is undeniable: the fact, and the inference from the fact, are cheerfully conceded. But, let me ask, what *are* the "Works o Antiquity"? It will be answered,—*the remains of ancient Literature. But surely these are not *all* the works of antiquity which have come down to us! The shores of time are strewn with other wrecks besides those of the writings of Poets, and Historians, and Philosophers. How comes it that in an University which is so attentively bent on understanding the mind of the ancients, the attention should be confined to *one class* of their works,—to the utter exclusion of *every other*?

The Analogy which subsists between the remains of ancient Literature, and those of ancient Art is perhaps somewhat closer and more interesting than at first sight might be supposed to be the case. Some of these points of resemblance are obvious. Greek Poetry and Greek Sculpture for example, are independent but kindred methods of expressing national feeling: both were in their origin of a religious character: both underwent a peculiar

be kept from the English reader:—"Parents," says he, "send their children at a very tender age to school,—enjoining on the master far greater attention to their external deportment, than to their proficiency in reading and music. Not that their teachers, however, neglect their progress in these branches of study; for when the children have learnt their letters, and are able to understand what they read, (their education having been hitherto conducted orally), the reading-master makes them sit on benches, and forces them to read and learn by heart *portions of the works of the best poets*. These abound in maxims for guidance, in episodes, and panegyrics of ancient worthies; which it is hoped will inflame the young with the generous desire to emulate such excellence, and with a longing to become great and good themselves. The music-master meantime bestows exactly the same attention on their good conduct, and sees that the children commit no mischief, &c."—Compare Aristoph. *Nub.* 961—972; and *Ranæ*, 1030 to verse 1056.

progressive development, and reflected the successive aspects of Greek Society: both attained to the highest pitch of excellence at about the same time; and both have descended to us in a fragmentary state. Out of each of these remarks, several others naturally arise. Since ancient Art is fragmentary, and it is therefore difficult to understand ancient Art; we may be sure that the small portion of the ancient writings which have come down to us must for ever exclude us from a *perfect* appreciation of ancient Literature. Again, if a single statue out of a group, or the fragment of a frieze, can only be imperfectly understood,—particularly when they have been mutilated,—so must it be with single or fragmentary compositions in Literature: but I abstain from insisting longer on a resemblance which might evidently be carried much further. — Such considerations then, seem at once to recommend ancient Sculpture to our notice, and to suggest a doubt whether we may not have been too long strangers to it. But the interest it possesses for us, has surely been very inadequately stated. Let us consider for a moment what we mean when we say that Greek Sculpture, no less than Greek Poetry, is one of the methods of expressing national feeling. Surely, if it be so, it might be inferred *à priori* that we should find it visibly impressed with the characteristics of the national mind,—just as the idiom of the Greek language, in countless particulars, reminds one of the character and genius of the extraordinary people on whose lips it became the plastic instrument of expression in every department of thought and sentiment. If, for instance, the impatience of the national character, of which it was remarked by one of themselves that no skill on the part of the orator could effectually baffle it, seems to account for the withholding of the subject of the verb to the

end of the sentence* :—if their quickness, their εὐστοχία, is borne silent testimony to, in their elliptical modes of expression, so frequent and so perplexing,—most frequent and perplexing perhaps in their philosophical writings:—if their scientific precision enlarged their vocabulary, and multiplied the inflexions of their nouns and verbs ; and their fertile imaginations required a language which should accommodate itself to every novel and extraordinary compound :—if their politeness found relief in the conditional uncertainty of the optative mood with the particle ἄν; and suggested the interrogative form where other nations use the imperative :—if that language occasionally embodies features of the national faith ; as, that the conception of the Universe is convertible with the conception of Order,—that Truth is in its very nature incapable of oblivion—that Beauty and Goodness are so intimately connected, that they should form one single word,—and that the Happy man is he who stands well with his GOD† :—again,

* Thucydides b. iii. latter part of c. 38. — Perhaps the position of the main word in the following references may repay a student for his pains in verifying them in Dindorf's edition :—Ὀρέσσης, *Æsch. Ag.* 879 : "Ἀτλαν, *Prom. V.* 427 : Ὀρέσταν, *Soph. El.* 163 : Αἴγισθον, *ib.* 957 : Θεσεύς, *Æd. Col.* 1350 : Ὀδυσσεύς, *Phil.* 1139.—Cf. also *Hor. Carm.* iii. 7. 5. (Gygen). —The English reader (and the classical reader too) will be gratified by the following very faithful version of the passage last referred to, for which I am indebted to A. H. Clough, Esq., of Oriel College :

Why, Astéria, weep, whom the Favonian
Spring-tide breezes 'ill bring,—safe to thee home again;
Rich with ware of the Indies,
Thy true lover immutable,—
Gyges?...

† κόσμος—ἀλήθεια—καλοκάγαθία—εὐδαιμονία. See p. 299 of Tupper's beautiful "Proverbial Philosophy." — Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* vi. 5. 8.—Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* b. i. 1.—Arist. *Eth. Nic.* x. 9, 1, (the verse especially,) and x. 8, 13 *ad finem*.

if their belief in the influence of the eye* led them to connect the accusative of the noun with verbs of Sight; though Sound and Touch and Taste and Smell require a genitive,—in other words, if they shewed by a simple inflexion that, in the case of these four senses, *the source* of the sensation was conceived of as residing in the outward object; while in the case of sight, it resided *in the eye*:—if their theory of the supremacy of Mind led them to express notions connected with intellectual speculation by compounding the verb with *κατά*,—implying that in the speaker's view the mind is sublime, and must humble itself, must look *down*, to take cognizance of the things of sense†:—in a word; if we may trace the intellectual disposition of Greece visibly impressed on the very language of Greece,—and therefore, *à fortiori*, on her literature,—then, surely, we may expect to find some impress of that mind on the works of Art she has bequeathed to us: and should it appear that anything of the kind is discoverable, how shall we excuse ourselves for wholly neglecting the study of these, while we are so intent on the study of the other? Why, at all events, exclude ourselves from such

* The superstitious belief in the *evil eye* has been treated of by many; and is alluded to by almost every writer of Antiquity. So widely spread a notion seems to give point to such passages as Æsch. *Ag.* 240, 470, 742-4, etc. See also Dindorf's correction of Soph. *Frg.* 169, *ad* Æsch. *Ag.* 240.—It may be allowable to remark in connection with this subject, that the ancients evidently regarded the eye as *the seat of expression*: See Æschylus *Agam.* 271, 418 (supposing the line to mean "Where the eye of woman beams not," etc.), 520-1, 796-8.—Sophocles, *Œd. Tyr.* 528-9, *Œd. Col.* 729-30, *Ant.* 690, *Ajax*, 139-40, 462, etc. (Dindorf's ed.)

† Not only verbs which denote mental perception (e. g. γεωμετρικοί ... κατανοοῦσιν ἕκαστα), but verbs of hearing: for instance, οἱ γὰρ φίλανλοι ἀδυνατοῦσι τοῖς λόγοις προσέχειν, ἐὰν κατακούσωσιν ἀνλοῦντος, κ.τ.λ.—Ar. *Eth. Nic.* x. 5. 8.

singularly apposite illustrations of the literature of Greece as the works of her most gifted sons?

Let us see then whether, without incurring the charge of being unduly fanciful, some indication of Greek feeling, analogous to those noticed in the structure of the language, may not be traced on the representations which have come down to us; and pursuing the analogy already noticed between Sculpture and the severer forms of dramatic composition,—in Greek Tragedy for example, I suppose we are immediately struck with such characteristics as the following. We find a few great stories,—as the history of *Œdipus* or of *Agamemnon*; the “tale of Troy divine” being as it were a *summum genus*, under which almost all may be comprehended. Six of the seven extant plays of *Sophocles* are clearly to be referred to this source; besides most of those of *Æschylus*, and of *Euripides*. When we are told the subject of the drama, we can guess the names of the spectral shapes which are about to stalk before us. Whatever phase of the history of *Agamemnon* is to become the lofty theme, we can divine, with more or less accuracy, who are to be the agents. Nor does there seem any wish on the part of the poet to change this order of things,—to escape from the trammels of his craft. We find no impatience of restraint—no *Gothic* wish to introduce many speakers, and hitherto untried elements. He seems the creature of the same stern Necessity which impelled *Agamemnon*, and *Clytæmnestra*, and *Orestes*:—spell-bound by the same terrible power which hurled *Œdipus* down to unutterable misery. Observe too how little of *plot* there is in the ancient drama; if one could forget the climax to which we are brought by the line,

καῶωγ' ἀκούειν· ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀκουστέον·

one might almost say that there is an utter absence of plot in these plays. The characters come before us like statues. When they make their appearance, they excite no emotion: when they have ceased to speak, they leave behind no regret. One cannot even always feel sure whether a speaker has left the stage or not; nor how many persons are upon it at any given time. On the other hand, it is seldom of any importance that we should know these circumstances. All is, for the most part, sublimely cold, and statuesque, and passionless: in which particulars one is strongly reminded of the extraordinary contrast between the Greek and the English (allow me to call it the *Gothic*) drama. And whence is this? Chiefly, probably, hence: the Gothic drama supposes *the freedom of the will*. The Greek drama is impressed with the belief that man is the creature of Necessity. Hence our stirring plot—our varied subject—our diversity of incident—our endless variety of character. A poet would be thought just as presumptuous *now*, if he were to write a play about Hamlet, or Macbeth, or King Lear, as he would have been thought *then* if he had presumed to depart from the mighty precedent, and ventured on wholly untrodden ground.

And if there be truth in all this, as I suppose it will be granted that, on the whole, there is; then, let us admit that there is something equally peculiar, equally characteristic in the feeling which seems to have influenced the sculptors of antiquity in the remains of plastic Art which have come down to our times. Here, as in the realms of poetry, we shall find the artists of a fine age tied down to certain conventional stories and conventional forms. In this, as in that, Religion is the source of inspiration; for the earliest efforts of Art, no less than the original element

of the drama, were consecrated expressly to Heaven; and neither ever wholly lost this character. Gods, and heroes, and deified men, were at first the only fit subjects for the artist; and the period perhaps hardly ever arrived when they were not acknowledged to be the proper objects for the exercise of his skill. In Tragedy therefore, if a living individual, or existing political institutions are to be glanced at, the speech is put into the mouth of a god, or some illustrious mythic personage: and in Art, if Alexander the Great is to be portrayed, it is with the horn of Ammon; when the earlier kings of Egypt and some of those of Syria appear on coins, it is with the radiated crown of deity; and even in Roman times, if a portrait of Antinoüs is intended, the form and attributes are those of a Mercury.—We recognise in ancient art generally, and in the ancient statues of sacred personages in particular, the same faithful adherence to a received type which we before noticed in the drama. An antiquary will immediately assent to the statement that the Greek deities which we call by the Latin names of Jupiter, Juno, Bacchus, Minerva, Mercury, Venus, Neptune, etc., have each their distinct *types* or modes of representation; and may be readily recognised, however rudely executed. Minerva, for instance, is a standing, draped, female figure attired in the ægis, and armed with a helmet, shield, and spear,—such a conventional figure, in short, as Pisistratus represented her, when he wanted his countrymen to recognise her.* Juno is draped, and generally seated (*χρυσόθρονος*); wearing a peculiar head-ornament. Venus is a draped figure, (in

* Herod. i. 60.—It would be easy to give references to works of art, executed in remote countries, and at distant periods, where a certain type has been faithfully adhered to: but it would answer no adequate purpose in so slight a composition as the present.

archaic art), slightly raising her garment with one hand, as if in the act of dancing. Other personages, as Penelope, Ulysses, Achilles, Hector, Theseus, Hercules,—or monsters, as the Sphinx, the Chimæra, the river Achelœus, and the like, are equally recognisable; though in some instances, to pronounce upon them with accuracy, and at once, requires a good eye and great experience. Brøndsted, for instance, thought he recognised the type of Cephalus (as the figure occurs on the coins of Cephallenia) in the so-called Theseus of the Parthenon marbles. Enough however on this subject. I merely seek to explain what I mean when I speak of a *conventional* representation; and to make the analogy between Literature and Art, in this particular, apparent. The ancients, in truth, carried all this much further. They had conventional modes of representing the horse, the bull, the lion; birds and fish; flowers and trees; interiors of houses; the sea; a lake; a fountain; a river; a town; and the like. Are we not reminded in all this of a certain uniformity, or sameness, a certain recurrence of thought and expression* in the Greek drama? of that eternally recurring simile† of the mournful nightingale for example, bewailing “Itys, Itys.” Had it not become a kind of conventional *type of sorrow*?

We have also to observe in illustration of the statuesque

* For instance, Soph. *Aj.* 479—80; *El.* 989, 1082—3; *Trach.* 721; *Frg.* 436; *Æs. Frg.* 82, 163, 384. Again, Soph. *Frg.* 359, 610, 683. Again, Soph. *Frg.* 288, 302, 666; *Æs. Frg.* 277. Again, Soph. *Aj.* 125—6; *Frg.* 13, 682; Eurip. *Æol. Frg.* 18. Again, Solon’s reply; Soph. *Trach.* 1—3; *Æd. Tyr.* 1186, etc., 1528—30; *Frg.* 520, 572. Again, Soph. *El.* 696—7; *Æd. Col.* 253—4; *Aj.* 455—6; *Antig.* 1337—8; Herod. *passim.* Again, Soph. *Trach.* 132, etc., 440; *Aj.* 131—2; *El.* 916—7; *Antig.* 1158—9; *Frg.* 93; Her. i. 5, *ad fin.* 207, &c. &c. &c.

† See *Æsch. Aj.* 1140—1149;—Soph. *El.* 147—149 and 1077; *Ajax*, 622—634; *Antig.* 422—125; *Trach.* 962—963, etc.

character of the ancient drama, that the masks which the personages wore, supply an additional link in the chain of resemblances; and help to establish the unity of spirit which pervaded the works of antiquity. How statue-like, how unspeakably cold, must the beings which the poet called up, have seemed, as they glided across the stage with those blank unvarying faces: only recognisable by the *conventional character* of the mask, or costume, as already hinted. Thus Achilles and Niobe were recognisable, though they sat on the stage muffled up,—*γρύζοντες οὐδὲ τουτί*.* There can have been little or nothing of passion even in the most passionate parts of a play, with such calmness of language,—with such circumstances of costume. The very recognition of Orestes and Electra must have been scarcely distinguishable from the embracing figures of a group in marble. Some will perhaps think that the gaudy drapery, the *κρόκου βαφή*, would sufficiently rescue stage representations from this charge; but they must be reminded that the statues of antiquity were all painted. The eyes and the flesh were tinted—the hair often gilded—the drapery, scarlet or blue, and the like: so that there was nothing to distinguish an actor in repose from a statue. Instead therefore, of contrasting a heroine of antiquity with the Portias and Juliets of the Gothic drama, we should (if we would understand them) throw ourselves into the mind of antiquity; and think of them as figures on a bas-relief. One would not perhaps be so apt to charge with frigidity, the lyric lamentations of Antigone just before her entombment, if one were to read those verses, sitting before an ancient frieze. It would be like reading an interpretation of the sculptured marble. The same remark may also be made

* Aristoph. *Rane*, 911—913.

respecting Clytæmnestra,—who is commonly compared with Lady Macbeth; and well she may be; for certainly if one believed in the transmigration of souls, one would suppose that the mind of Æschylus had revived in the mind of Shakspeare:—I can in no other way defend or account for her cold-blooded dialogue with her son when he was about to incur the guilt of matricide, than by reminding myself of the statuesque spirit of ancient Tragedy: and perhaps the passage in which she draws so perfect an image of a Mother and her sleeping infant, and which seems to unman Orestes,—

ἐπίσχες, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἶδεσαι, τέκνον,
μαστόν, πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἄμα
οὔλοισιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα,—*

has already suggested the same thought to many. One sees the outstretched arms of the unnatural parent, and

* *Choeph.* 896—898.—The English reader may not disdain even so imperfect a rendering of the passage as the following:

Hold back thy murd'rous hand, my son!—my child!—
Look on this breast and feel some touch of pity:
This breast, where thou (so many a time and oft!)
Hast hung; and *in thy sleep* with boneless gums
Drawn the warm milk that did sustain thy being.

Æschylus was a great painter. Besides a multitude of passages equally graphic with that just quoted, see the allusions in *Ag.* 412—419: 241—242: 741: *Eum.* 50—52; (the painting he refers to may be seen in Millingen's *Unedit. Monuments*, ser. i. pl. xv). Compare also the lines *Ag.* 113—120 with the coin of Agrigentum which Noehden has engraved, (*Specimens of Anc. Coins of Magna Græcia and Sicily, etc.*, pl. iii. p. 7),—a composition which must have struck Æschylus during his residence in Sicily.—The poet's graphic turn may also be inferred from *Ar. Ran.* 933. Bacchus: "Yes, by the gods! why, *I* remember lying awake all night, trying to think what kind of fowl the *tawny horse-cock* was."—Æschylus: "Twas painted on a ship, you blockhead, for a sign."

her bare neck : Orestes with averted eyes ; and Pylades calmly reminding him of the risk he incurs of offending heaven, if he shrinks from the execution of its mandates.

Now, though it certainly is not necessary to the illustration of the subject immediately before us, I cannot forbear further remarking, in this place, that the traces of the cold statuesque spirit which we have found pervading some of the realms of ancient Art and Literature, may be discovered extending much further in antiquity, if we would give ourselves the pains to look for them. They seem no less discernible in the *Architecture* of Greece, than in the other sister arts,—of two of which (Music and Painting) we shall have occasion to say a few words by and bye. But here let me explain myself; for I would not be misunderstood. — The transcendent beauty of Grecian Architecture, I am the last to call in question.— Further, that the ancients were endued with a natural sense of rhythmical beauty, (and I suppose rhythm is that which gives *form* to Music), so painfully acute and exquisite that it is scarcely comprehensible to us,—this also must be cheerfully admitted.—And again, that not only their statues, but even their public edifices were externally decorated with colour,—this curious phenomenon we likewise allow, and concede to antiquity.—But what I wish to point out is, that there was a certain *falling short* in each and all of these several departments which nothing but Christianity — (a new creation) — was able to supply. Let the character of the *architecture* of a Grecian temple, for instance, be compared with that of a Gothic cathedral. It will be felt that there is a profoundness of sentiment about the latter, of which the coldness of the Greek is wholly destitute. The soaring column, and bowing arch, and dim long-drawn aisle; — the deepest tones of

Music; — the subdued splendours of Painting: — in Christianity all these combine their mingled utterance: all the creatures of God, so to speak, do here seem to render Him their united homage. The Church, as Christ re-edified it, had a spell which could evoke them.

And I am not afraid of being thought fanciful, if I suggest, as a further very striking illustration of the coldness of antiquity, another deficiency, or short-coming, which, Christianity also first supplied. I allude to the fact that the ancients do not appear to have known the sentiment which we call *Love*. Woman, as it would seem, never attained (or regained) her lawful position in society, till the intervention of Christianity; — until “the angel Gabriel was sent from GOD unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.” So long as the female sex remained degraded, this feeling, which may be regarded as a *Gothic* passion, could not exist: and so long as mankind followed the light of Nature, as it is called, — (by which, I suppose, is meant the scarcely perceptible reflection of the light of *Revelation*), — so long must the female sex have remained degraded. Aristotle, I think, commonly classes women, children, and *brutes* together; and when “the sex” is mentioned in poetry, it is commonly in some disrespectful or disparaging way. Let a heroine of Tragedy speak for herself: the allusion is to her lord: —

ὁ δ' εἶπε πρὸς με βαί', αἰεὶ δ' ὑμνούμενα·
 “γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἢ σιγῇ φέρει.”*

The tone of Hector's address to Andromache is indeed

* Soph. *Aj.* 292—3.—Cf. *Œd. Col.* 1115: and *Frag.* 61, and perhaps 102: but especially *Æsch. Ag.* 914—6.—Sophocles has a beautiful passage on the life of Woman, *Frag.* 517.

touching; but the world was five hundred years younger when Homer wrote.

At all events, whether the Greeks knew what Love was, or not, they had no word in their language (a language not particularly deficient in *names* for *things*) to express it.* *Φιλία, φίλησις, εὔνοια, ὁμόνοια, στοργή*, etc., as we all know, mean things very different. As for *ἔρως*, which man shares with the brute creation, it would not need to be mentioned at all, were it not unhappily the only word for Love in the Greek language. As might have been expected, we accordingly find nothing like the romantic passion in Æschylus or Sophocles; except, perhaps, that we are just reminded of it by the little passage between Hæmon and Antigone:—rather touching, it must be confessed; especially that description of the dying youth,—

.... ἐς δ' ὑγρὸν

ἀγκῶν' ἔτ' ἔμφρων παρθένῳ προσπτύσσεται, κ. τ. λ.

But such an exception really only serves to prove the rule. If the thought had ever entered the heart of one of those old dramatists, they would never have written as they did. *We* call it “*the passion*,” as if there were no other: *they* never mention it, as if it were no passion at all. “Single-speech” Pylades never gives us *a hint* of what he is thinking about, while Electra and his friend are talking at Agamemnon’s tomb! The only remark he *does* make, as far as *feeling* is concerned, might have

* The Romans were, of course, worse off than the Greeks. Cicero’s phrase for “rivalry in love” is *Contentio uxoriæ conditionis*. (Uxoriam conditio!!!)

proceeded from Launce's "pebble-hearted cur": but about *Electra*,—οὐδὲ γρῦ.

To speak seriously, (and to dismiss the subject), it is almost affecting to notice what the result of all this was. Men sought for sympathy and kindness in *Friendship*; and hence the endeavours of the ancients to reduce *Friendship* to a system; hence the prominent place this sentiment occupies in their writings; hence the two Books which Aristotle has devoted to *Φιλία*; hence many of the speculations on the relative social duties of the members of a *πόλις*; and hence the treatises which have come down to us, on this subject. These may, in some sense, be considered as filling that space in the literature of antiquity, which the romantic novel has filled in the literature of modern Europe.—But this is a digression for which I ought to apologise. To return to the matter more immediately before us.

Lastly then,—in illustration of the Analogy we seek to establish,—it may be suggested that a spirit, uniformly prolific, pervades and ennobles all the works of antiquity. The three hundred plays ascribed to the exuberant genius of the three great tragedians of Greece, remind one of that lavish prodigality of artistical skill which is so striking in a collection of ancient coins; amid many thousands of which, it is scarcely possible to recognise any two specimens that are quite alike. Both classes of works are in their particular way unrivalled, and stamped with immortality: both are but imperfectly understood: both require long study, in order to be at all felt or appreciated. Again:—as in the language there arise such delicate discriminations of meaning,—such exquisite points of beauty, depending often on the collocation of a word, or the nice insertion of a particle,—so is it with *fine Art*. Its "condensed construction" defies

criticism: the essence of expression, in either case, evaporates in the attempt to analyse it: its felicity may be felt but cannot be explained; and can no more be found out (either in Literature or Art) by an apparatus of critical rules, than the beauty of a landscape can be accounted for by a diagram, or the bloom on a cheek by a lancet.

But enough has now been said on this subject, and I may be growing tedious. Such, at all events, are some of the analogies which may be pointed out (how many more may be felt!) between Greek works of Literature and Greek works of Art. What has been said has been thrown out rather in the way of suggestion than intended for the formal discussion of a question with which, deeply enamoured as one may be, one is but imperfectly acquainted. The sum of all amounts to this. If the connexion we have been insisting upon does really exist, why are the two subjects so effectually sundered? Why is a man urged to toil on for ever in one department, and never allowed the help and the solace which he might derive from a practical acquaintance with the other?

However, I can well imagine some one remarking on what has gone before,—“There may be some truth in all this; but the analogies you point out, however real, are not very important. Young men at Oxford have no time for such things; and if they had, it is not to be expected that they would devote themselves to their consideration; and if they did, it would not help them much in the Schools:” and the like.

These objections however, and others like them, are grounded on a complete misapprehension of the question. It is not for an instant intended that speculations, such as I have hazarded, should be thrust on young men on their arrival at Oxford; nor indeed is it wished that the philosophy or metaphysics of art, or by whatever name

it should be called, should form any *indispensable* part of the educational system of the University. Still less is it contemplated that hours which are claimed by severe and definite studies should be wasted in dreamy guesses at the riddles of Antiquity : and it is not apprehended that the season required for exercise and relaxation would be interfered with, by the seductions of a gallery of Sculpture. Briefly, let it be observed, that it is with Taste somewhat as it is with the Virtues,—*ἐγγίνονται αἱ ἀρεταὶ...πεφυκόσι μὲν ἡμῖν δέξασθαι αὐτὰς, τελειομένοις δὲ διὰ τοῦ ἔθους*.^{*} No pains taken with a spirit that is not “finely touched,” could avail to give it a sense of Beauty, if the faculty for apprehending beauty was denied it at its birth. You might as well talk to a man born blind, about the Cartoons ; or to a deaf man, about an Oratorio. Men often escape from a discussion on sounds by declaring they have *no ear*. It is a far more common (though less suspected) defect to have *no eye*. A gallery of Art would therefore, after all, appeal not to the many, but to the few : and it would be but a mute appeal.—Further, it will be admitted, I think, by those acquainted with the subject, that there is little fear of men being drawn away unduly from the study of Languages, or History, or Philosophy, by the seductive allurements of ancient Art. A laborious course of classical study, once entered upon, supposes an amount of resolution, and energy, and principle, which will not be easily perverted. If the seductions of modern Literature, — of poetry and romance, — and of such elegant pursuits as are open to us all in this place, as drawing, and music, and architecture, — prove ineffectual, — surely the *dead language of Art* will plead in even less persuasive

* Aristot. *Eth. Nic.* ii. 1. 3.

tones. Truly, its beauty lies not on the surface. It may not “unsought be won.” It has nothing to attract withal, and much to repel. One proof may suffice. Let any one attempt to enumerate how many of our countrymen have proved able interpreters of the mind of antiquity, as it is to be found in the *not-literary* remains of antiquity. They may be almost enumerated on the fingers of one’s two hands.

I take the liberty of supposing that by the time you have read thus far, you will desire to hear me state in express words what monuments those are which I desire to see in the Taylor gallery ; and what the advantages which I suppose would actually accrue from their possession : for I am aware that I have been vaunting the interest and importance of the study of ancient art to one who will not differ from me in opinion on the subject. It is particularly agreeable to me to be thus precise. Were I less conscious of the goodness of the cause I am pleading, it might be safer to keep to generalities, and write a rhetorical essay, instead of a plain earnest appeal : but the duty before us is definite,—the monuments themselves capable of enumeration,—and the chief advantages to be derived from their acquisition neither difficult to discover, nor inconsiderable.

What then are the grandest existing sculptures,—not of antiquity alone, but of any age, any clime ? We need no prophet to tell us that these are the sublime creations with which Phidias enriched the pediments of the Parthenon at Athens ;—the astonishing fragments of which Lord Elgin brought to England in 1803, and which are now deposited in the British Museum. To enter at any length into the history of those objects, would be foreign to the purpose of this letter : to expatiate on

their merits, would be presumptuous : to explain them, is beyond my ability. It has been attempted by many, and achieved in a manner altogether satisfactory by none.* It will be quite enough for us to remember that they were the finest work of the best artist of the first city of Greece,—achieved when that city had attained its highest pitch of glory. Pericles suggested—Phidias executed†—the Islands of the Ægean and the confederate cities of Asia Minor paid for them. What more need be said?—When the mighty mind of Greece first felt its greatness and its power, then it was that she created those works. And can we forget that all this took place at the period when the prophetic canon came to a close;—that the Almighty Voice was now on the eve of being withdrawn from men, and Its divine accents were not to be heard on earth for a second period of four hundred years? It was then that Providence commissioned uninspired wisdom to take up the thread of the world's History ; and allowed the human intelligence of Greece to exhibit those marvellous phenomena of wisdom, imagination, and energy,—philosophical, literary, and æsthetical,—which in our admiration and wonder we sometimes call by a figure of speech “divine.” The

* Among the chief names connected with this subject, are those of Visconti, Col. Leake, and the late Chev. P. O. Brøndsted. I look back with much pleasure and gratitude to some happy hours passed among the Elgin marbles with the last named learned antiquary and most indulgent friend. His theory concerning those compositions, which he had made his particular study, and to which he brought the stores of profound and varied scholarship, enlisted the sympathy of all,—even of those who entertained a somewhat different opinion as to the particular attribution of some of the statues.

† Πάντα δὲ διῆκε καὶ πάντων ἐπίσκοπος ἦν αὐτῷ Φειδίας. Plutarch, *Vit. Pericl.* (quoted somewhere by Dr. E. Clarke).

struggle with Persia first made Athens conscious of her nobility ; her resources, physical and intellectual ; her exceeding greatness. Then Æschylus, and soon after, Sophocles wrote verse, and Thucydides wrote prose. Then too it was that Phidias achieved those immortal sculptures which have (in part) survived the wreck of nearly twenty-three hundred years. How does it happen that while Thucydides, and Æschylus, and Sophocles are read by so many, the works of Phidias are read by so few ? But to continue.

The circumstances which give such peculiar interest to the Parthenon marbles, and indeed set them above all other extant specimens of ancient sculpture, deserve a brief enumeration. They are these:—we know their precise date:* we are informed, not only of the school from which they proceeded, but of the master by whom they were (certainly in part) executed: their locality is determined, not only geographically, but in the temple itself; and hence we know their use or intention: and Pausanias has recorded the subject (no longer recognisable, except with the aid of his brief notice) of the two pediments which they filled:—the eastern represented the birth of Athene,—the western the contest of Athene and Poseidon for the soil of Attica; when the former called the *Olive* into being. Who but remembers, while he reads these words, those *λαμπρὰ ἔπη* of the poet of Colonus, wherein he recites the chief glories of his native land in strains as imperishable as the subject of his praise?

* “The construction and completion of the Parthenon is to be attributed almost entirely to the eight years occurring between 446 and 437, B.C.”—Col. Leake’s “Athens and Demi,” vol. i. p. 462.

There is too, hereabout, such plant as I,
to Asia's land belonging, hear not of;—
nor in the mighty Doric Isle of Pelops,
ever of old! the scion of the soil,—
unconquerable—uncreate;—the terror
of foemen's spears; which on this plain of ours
flourisheth most;— the grey-leaved, the nutritious *Olive*!

* * * * *

Yea, and another vaunt have I,—the gift
of the mighty god to this maternal soil,—
most glorious, to rehearse: her proudest boast!
how blest in steeds, how blest in colts, how blest upon the main.
Hail son of Kronus, (for 'twas thou that didst
uplift her to this boasting), lord POSEIDON!
when for the steed the salutary curb
first in these streets of ours thou didst contrive.

Faithful it is hoped; but how poor and cold it sounds!
as indeed all literal translation of such poetry must of
necessity be. Assuredly of these marbles, no less than of
the chorus whence these verses are taken, we may exclaim
in the words of the great poet last quoted, μέγας ἐν
τοῦτοις θεός,— οὐδὲ γηράσκει.

A series of casts from these marbles then, one and all,
I claim for Oxford. Not the wrecks of the statues from
the Pediments alone,— but the beautiful frieze represent-
ing the Panathenaic procession; and the Metopes, each
allusive to Attic story;—together with those other frag-
ments (more or less considerable, and some of surpassing
beauty*) which recent excavations at Athens have lately
brought to light. This, in point of importance, is the
first set of objects which imperatively claims our notice.

Inferior in interest, as everything else must be, we
must not fail to remember in this place certain other

* Casts of these have recently been received from Athens,
and lie in the Elgin Room. There is among them a Victory
fastening on her sandal: a small bas-relief, but so splendid!

very important series of marbles which are to be referred to about the same period; the casts of which should be found in an adjoining room, and which the student should contemplate in connection with the marbles of the Parthenon. First, I would mention the important series of statues (little known I fear in this country) which enrich the Museum of Florence; and which had always been recognised as representing the story of Niobe and her children: but which it was reserved for a countryman of our own, first to throw valuable light upon. Mr. Cockerell, (the accomplished Architect of the very gallery whose cause we are pleading), with his accustomed fine perception of the meaning of ancient art, has shown that these marbles constituted the contents of the pediment of some forgotten temple in Greece or Asia,—whence, at some remote period, they must have been carried to Italy. The Royal Academy is happy in the possession of a complete set of these casts; and a restoration of the Pediment, etched by Mr. Cockerell himself, now lies before me,—which makes one sigh for a sight of the original.

And next, let me remind you of the fine sculptures in bas-relief (also in the British Museum) which are known as the Phigaleian marbles. They formed the frieze of the temple of Apollo at Bassæ, near Phigaleia in Arcadia; and were discovered in 1812, by C. R. Cockerell, Esq., and John Foster, Esq., in company with three foreigners. They represent the battle of the Centaurs with the Lapithæ, and of the Athenians with the Amazons.

We must remember, that to the same period of Art as the Parthenon marbles—(whether a little earlier, or a little later, we cannot tell: it is a *vexata questio*, and does not materially affect our present object)—belong those five or six draped female statues which Sir C. Fellows brought from Xanthus two or three years ago, and which

are all in the British Museum; being temporarily deposited in the little room which connects Egyptian with Athenian art.* I will not detain you with any remarks upon these works; but you are perhaps aware that some of them,—one especially, the female figure with a dove at her feet,—are of extraordinary merit. In short, they are fine specimens of a fine time; and should not be entirely separated from the relics we have been enumerating.

I take leave of this period with reminding you of the grandest female statue in the world,—the Venus of Melos. In connexion with this wonderful work, Millingen mentions the Venus of Capua; and considers both as ancient copies of two transcendent productions which belonged to this—the finest time of Art. You will find them both engraved in the second series of his “Ancient Unedited Monuments”;—and to the work of that truly learned antiquary and lamented friend, I would refer you for further particulars concerning them; but we may be allowed to suggest a doubt as to the non-originality which he imputes to the first named statue.—One remark may be allowed in passing. Both exhibit the goddess half undraped,—a peculiarity which enables us to assign the sculpture to a period *subsequent* to the age of Phidias. There was a maidenly modesty in the mind of early Greece which shrunk from the merest semblance of indelicacy. Accordingly, the primitive representations of the female form are covered up to the neck. In my Father’s collection of Terra-cottas from Melos, now in the British Museum, there was a little female figure, seated, and holding a dove; (with a smaller one at its side, which is represented with a lyre). It was very ancient,—indeed of the earliest

* Transferred, since this was written, to a room, (not yet open to the public), which is devoted to the Lycian Marbles.

style of Art: but though the personage intended was Venus, the drapery was so disposed that nothing but the left breast was visible. It was reserved for a more licentious age, and a change in manners which Thucydides comments upon, and in morals, which the great comic Poet has not failed in every page to reprove, to introduce an innovation in this respect.—We may here observe how Art exhibits, reflected as in a mirror, the social changes of the period to which it belongs. The archaic age, mindful of the sanctity of beauty, carefully conceals the person*:—the second period of art withdraws half the concealment, and exhibits loveliness—

....οὐκέτ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων
....δεδορκῶς νεογάμου νύμφης δίκην

—the third period withdraws it entirely. Thus the earliest female statues carefully conceal the entire person. The Venus of Melos is an example of the second period, and is half exposed. The Venus de Medici is perhaps as fine a specimen as could be found of the third period; and *she* is entirely naked. But this is to anticipate.

We divide Greek history, for different purposes,—whether consciously, or unconsciously,—into periods; and I have already hinted at three: one of which very distinctly precedes that now under consideration. It is of the second of these, (which may be considered, in round numbers, to extend over the space of very nearly two centuries), that the Parthenon marbles, as already suggested, form so magnificent an exponent. The Persian war (B.C. 490), and the era of Alexander (B.C. 330), seem obviously to suggest themselves as the limits of this

* See the remonstrance of Gyges to Candaules, Herodot. i. 8; and the remark which Herodotus himself makes at the end of c. 10.

splendid period,—the moments of the acmé of the second and third empires,—moments memorable in a historical, a social, and a literary, point of view : and shall we be surprised to find that the memorable changes which were going on in these several departments, made an impression also on Art ? Nay, rather let us expect here to discover the most striking indication of those changes.

I revert to the first of the three great periods hinted at: a period, which, whenever we may choose to consider it to have begun, ended with the Persian war. We are anxious to find some statues,—a series if possible,—distinctly referable to this early age; and of all the treasures lost to us, one such series has happily been preserved. Allusion is of course made to the contents of the two Pediments of the temple (called) of Jupiter Panhellenius, at Ægina,—a collection of statues, which Messrs. Cockerell and Foster (with a Bavarian traveller, named Linkh,) were so fortunate as to discover when they were engaged in excavating, in order to measure the said temple, in 1811.

A few words concerning the history of these statues shall suffice. Their subject is a matter of some uncertainty. Whether it be a passage in the history of the Æacidæ,—as one would have thought probable on *a priori* grounds,—or whether it represent the combat between Hector and Ajax over the body of Patroclus,—as the marbles themselves would rather incline one to believe,—remains open for discussion. The fragments of twenty-five statues were found, in all: of which Mr. Cockerell is of opinion that eleven occupied the western, and fourteen the eastern pediment. The latter bear the marks of highest intelligence. You will find a very exquisite etching of these monuments, accompanied by a

brief memoir, both by the last-named accomplished friend, in the periodical work cited below.*

These two series of marbles then in particular,—those namely from Ægina and those from the Parthenon,—claim our foremost attention. Both are of the highest order of merit; but they are great in different ways,—embodying the spirit of two different ages. Of the second series, enough has perhaps been said. The first exhibits the archaic features of art in a most interesting manner. The limbs have a peculiar rigidity, which reminds us that marble was a material of comparative novelty. They are clearly imitations of older works; and the heads, particularly, may perhaps have been copied from originals in wood. In all the figures there is a vast deal of spirit and power, but they are all singularly conformed to an archaic archetype. The crisp short curls,—the scrupulous fidelity of conventional details,—the quaint complacent smile on every face†,—peculiarities which every one can discern, but hardly describe, and which cannot be understood without a reference to the works themselves,—all this gives individuality to these marbles, as the expression of a certain period of Greek History, and claims for them a high place,—the very highest,—in our regard. This series, we need not add, is indispensable to our gallery.

In calling the Ægina marbles *archaic*, and claiming for them such prominent attention, it is only meant that they exhibit the spirit of the archaic period of art in its very perfection,—that is, when it had attained its highest beauty. You see genius struggling for expression,—but

* *Journal of Science and the Arts*, No. xii. (London, 1819), —p. 327. and *Addenda*.

† This singular and agreeable expression is recognisable on the early coins of Athens, Corinth, and some other cities.

it is struggling in fetters: you feel that you are on the eve of a great change, but that change has not yet arrived. When we look at the Parthenon, we are immediately made conscious that the change *has come*. The old heroic age had then departed, and for ever.—But the marbles of Ægina are, of course, no fair exponent of the *heroic* age of Greece. Of this age we lack adequate monuments. I suppose, besides the lions over the gate at Mycenæ, no sculptures of the Heroic age are extant; and that the Cyclopean remains of Mycenæ, Argos, Tiryns, and a few more towns, are the only existing relics of the age of Homer. Amid this dearth of materials, we must be content to cite the Harpy-tomb which Sir C. Fellows has lately brought from Lycia, as the best and perhaps the earliest extant specimen of a primitive time. It was probably executed about the seventh or eighth century before our era; and is preserved, as you are aware, in the British Museum. One would, of course, desire to possess a cast of this very interesting monument,—the exact locality and use of which are fortunately so well known. . . . Another memorable piece of sculpture referable to this first period of art, is the singularly archaic fragment which the learned friend I have already quoted, first introduced to the notice of English antiquaries. The original, which was found in Samothrace, is deposited in the Louvre; and a cast might be easily obtained. In the meanwhile I subjoin the reference to his work*, which should find a place in every College-Library,—as it does in our own.

Of the same period it may suffice further to mention (as easily made available to us) the well-known metopes found at Selinus in 1823,—casts of which are in the

* Millingen's *Ancient Uned. Monuments*, 2nd Series, pl. 1, p. 1.

British Museum*; the originals being deposited in the Museum at Palermo. These sculptures, which have no beauty, but are highly interesting and important, may be seen engraved in the folio publication of their discoverer, Mr. Angell. They are uncouth representations, derived as usual from ancient myths; as the death of Medusa, one of the adventures of Hercules, and the like. The fragments are numerous, but the perfect groups are but three. These however are, in their way, quite unique. They must be seen to be understood; and studied to be appreciated.

A third great epoch,—that namely, which succeeds the age of Alexander the Great,—remains to be noticed. We now find the barriers broken down which had so long fenced in the holy ground of public faith and public feeling: and a corresponding change is discernible in art,—a change which continued rapidly on the increase, till that general dissolution of things prevailed which ushered in Christianity; and, under Providence, paved the way for its rapid dissemination. At the beginning of the period under review, the physical investigations of the earlier schools of philosophy recede, and at last disappear before the metaphysical acuteness of Plato, and the free rationalism of Aristotle. On referring to the page of Greek History for some further illustration of a curious problem, we are reminded of the Indian expedition of the Macedonian conqueror, by which Greece first became exposed to the influence of the Oriental philosophy; and a mighty shock must have been inevitably given to the prejudices of so lively, so polite, and so susceptible a people. We

* Mr. Angell informs me that this is the only set of casts from these marbles in England. From these, however, casts would be easily procurable.

are further reminded of the teaching of the sophists, and the first inroad of the *subjective* into the *objective* world. —It is a memorable fact that Alexander the Great is the first human personage whose portrait appears on coins. Accordingly, as might have been expected, we now begin to find a mixture of the human with the divine in other monuments also: and shall find in the remark just offered a clue to much unwelcome novelty, and many apparent irregularities.—I am not aware of any grand series of marbles which are referred to this time: but as we descend in the scale of history, our monuments, whether in Art or Literature, increase in a rapid ratio. The great artists and the great authors have disappeared; but the inferior performers in either department have multiplied innumerbly. The difficulty now consists rather in selection. We shall not, at all events, err, in calling particular attention to such detached groups and single statues as the following:—the Laocoön: the dying gladiator: the gladiatorial figure sometimes called Brasidas at Amphipolis: the Diana of the Louvre: the Discobolus: the well-known figure of Cupid bending his bow: the figure called *the Genius* in the Vatican: the Farnese Hercules: the Flora of Naples: and those three beautiful, well-known works which formerly engrossed almost exclusive admiration,—the Venus de Medici, the Belvidere Apollo, and the Antinoüs. It is considered that some of these, particularly the three last named works, are of a late time;—perhaps referable to so low a period as the age of Hadrian; but that they are copies of older works,—works, as old perhaps as the age immediately succeeding the age of Alexander. The Apollo is considered to be an imitation of a bronze statue; and there are many peculiarities in the treatment of that fine work which irresistibly recommend the suggestion to our acceptance. The third figure (the Antinoüs) is

probably the copy of a Mercury,—with the portraiture of the favourite whose name it bears. In short, an attentive consideration of the matter leads us to the painful conclusion, that of the original statues of antiquity extremely few are extant: and in this period of Art, the last which we shall pass under review, a splendid copy of a lost original is probably that which wins our highest praise. But this is by the way, and something of a digression, though it is hoped not a tedious one.

It need scarcely be remarked, that my wish has rather been to produce a sketch than to exhibit a finished design: to suggest, not to prescribe. This faint outline therefore of the requirements of an University is all that I shall presume to offer. It must be superfluous to add that much has been passed over, wittingly. In specifying the *Ægina* marbles as a type of the first epoch of ancient Greek sculpture, I am not forgetful of the fact that many other fragments might be found belonging to the same time, and which would well deserve being contemplated side by side with them:—the same may be said of the works enumerated as specimens of the second; and especially of the third, which is perhaps the least *instructive*, period: least instructive, that is to say, to such students as would frequent a gallery of antiquities in Oxford. Each period would also conveniently admit of further subdivision.—My object, I trust, has been made sufficiently plain. It remains, however, to illustrate a little more fully, the advantage such a collection of monuments would be to an University.

And surely, after what has been already directly observed or indirectly suggested, much need not be said in addition to convince such persons as, I am willing to hope, will be induced to give these pages a patient reading, of the importance of a Collection like this to the classical

student. The sculptures of Ægina would be to him the *Herodotus*,—those of Athens, the *Thucydides* of art. The union of archaic simplicity with consummate knowledge and skill,—the touches of pathos combined with the utmost life and spirit,—and I may add the quaint smile on the faces of the one set of marbles:—the severe dignity,—the condensed truth and grandeur of the other,—remind me irresistibly of the characteristics of the two great Historians of antiquity. But even if this were not the case,—were there the utmost apparent discrepancy between these two sets of contemporary monuments,—there would remain a great many advantages, or, as one may say, *uses*; enough to recommend these marbles to the most matter-of-fact person imaginable. To take those from the Parthenon, for example:—who, let me ask, can read the 13th chapter of the 2nd book of Thucydides,—that passage namely, wherein Pericles is spoken of as alluding to the very marbles in question,—without an impatience to turn and gaze on the works themselves? But it would be endless to particularise. A thoughtful person could not live in a city which contained such a series of objects, without becoming in some degree affected by them; and if his memory were stored with the literature and institutions of the people by whom they were produced, he would soon learn to yield them his homage, and he would receive in return their silent teaching. He would insensibly imbibe the spirit of antiquity, if he might stand, at leisure moments, amid such relics; and it is to be supposed that by studying in the same school as Müller and Heeren, (but under happier auspices), his apprehension of their lessons might be sharpened;—the dryness and coldness of their scholarship and criticism relieved;—the materials for original thought and speculation supplied;—somewhat of the German enthusiasm for antiquity engendered without

its unintelligible mysticism: somewhat of its indefatigable spirit of research, without its miserable infidelity;—and the strange phenomenon be no longer witnessed, of learned men, when they leave our Universities, perplexed at the sight of the monuments of the very people whose literature they know so well:—with whose institutions, and history, and manners, they are familiar; but with whose *immortal works of Art* they are as unacquainted as with the monuments of central America, or of Japan. The most perplexing passages in the classic writers they have completely mastered, or at least fairly met: the subtleties of Greek thought and expression, they have made their daily study: but the rhythm of Art—the language of those old Greeks who wrote their thoughts on Pentelic marble,—*these* remain as great a mystery as the languages of Persepolis and of Etruria.—We are bold to assume, as a general position, that ancient Literature and ancient Art are naturally connected; and should never be entirely separated;—that to understand *either*, one must study *both*:—that even so, it will be found quite hard enough to acquire an adequate notion of the spirit and mind of antiquity: but that to understand the one *thoroughly*, without studying the other *at all*, is utterly impossible. A few words more, in illustration of the uses of a Gallery of Art will best be offered when I have completed my sketch.

Not to delay you too long, I will next suggest that to render complete such a collection as we could wish to possess in Oxford, the works of great modern Artists should not be altogether excluded. It may suffice to particularise, of mediæval art, the stupendous creations of Michael Angelo; his Moses, for example: and I would beg especially to remind you of the unfinished marble group by his hand, now in the possession of the Royal Academy.

It represents, in high relief, the Blessed Virgin—the Infant Saviour—and St. John Baptist. No words can express the sublimity of this composition. Once seen, it can never be forgotten. And a cast of it may be obtained—for thirty shillings!.....I have said nothing about the wonderful Italian school of Sculpture which preceded the age of Michael Angelo, simply because I know nothing beyond the fact that there *was* such a school.

To descend at once to modern times;—if, after the Taylor gallery had admitted all the works we have alluded to, room were still found for more,—one would be quite willing to admit a single specimen of the works of great modern sculptors: a single specimen of the skill of Flaxman, in whom the awful grandeur of antiquity revived; of Thorwaldsen; of Canova; of Chantrey; of the Westmacotts; of Gibson;—and a few more names. But instead of all this, what *have* we?—No *Ægina* marbles,—no Parthenon marbles;—none of the wonders of ancient,—none of the glories of modern art: nothing but a roomful of plaster casts from Chantrey's statues!!.....And these, neither historical compositions, nor statues of our greatest Worthies; but, in the majority of instances, funereal monuments of little great men: the melancholy effigies of mothers, or maidens who died before their time,—or soldiers, or statesmen:—funereal monuments, by the way, which do not even teach us the lesson which it properly falls within the province of monumental sculpture to convey. Our *fathers* felt that the departed had gone to their saint's rest: so they folded their hands meekly across their breasts in prayer; as the fittest posture for a living man, and the only fit posture for a dead one. But it is a well-known fact that we are wiser than our sires; and the whole of Christendom seems to be of the same opinion. Bishops (whether of Rome or of any other see) retain their

episcopal thrones. Our departed statesmen (unquiet spirits!) still harangue the house. Our philosophers cleave to their professorial chairs. All seem to "die hard." Our heroes cannot sheathe their swords and "take their rest with their martial cloaks around them;" but still clutch their weapons, and stand up among cannon-balls and muskets: or clap their hands upon their thighs, and stare coldly at you in stone;—clinging to what Gibbon calls "the insolence of health;" and looking as if they wanted to convince you that "a living dog is [*not*] better than a dead lion."*

It is absurd to argue that because these casts have been given us, that *therefore* they must be accommodated: still more absurd to suppose that they ought of necessity to find room in, or rather to *fill*, the principal apartment of the Taylor Gallery; what if other great sculptors were to leave us the casts which filled their *ateliers*? Must room be found for them too? Must the rest of the building be choked up? But this is an uncongenial topic, and I gladly abandon it. It is a painful and an ungracious thing to speak as if in disparagement of a great artist, (which is indeed alike foreign to my purpose and disposition), or to seem ungrateful for an intended favour: but it is yet more painful to see so famous an University exposed to the risk of being misunderstood by all Europe, (for what is done here, is not done in a corner): and this it is which has suggested the boldness of this letter.

* Among several beautiful exceptions to these remarks, I have particular pleasure in calling to mind some of the works of Sir Richard Westmacott (as the monument of the Duc de Montpensier in Henry VII.'s Chapel),—and of his son, with whom I am quite sure the criticism here hazarded will find favour. The proofs Mr. Westmacott has given of his fine feeling for Christian Art are neither few nor inconsiderable. A monument to the Earl of Hardwicke is one of many instances which occur to my remembrance.

But I must seem forgetful of the subject proposed for consideration at the outset. Form and Colour were mentioned as a great and neglected means of education. Of Colour not a word has been said ; and I have spoken of Form, as if it were only to be seen in Sculpture, and in ancient sculpture too. In thus narrowing the ground however, we have acted advisedly. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is easy to apply what has been said to any other department of art,—ancient or modern : and our remarks have been restricted to the Sculptures of ancient Greece, because these seem to present most attraction, and offer most advantages to the student. Waiving, for the moment, any allusion to Colour, it is imperative on us to remark, however, that it is to do great injustice to Antiquity to speak of its sculptors alone ; as if we had forgotten the claims of its artists in gold, and silver, and bronze, in precious stones, and in clay, or *terra cotta*. The genius of Greece seems to have been inexhaustible,—for ever developing some fresh combination of the beautiful elements which it had at its command. Horace* has expressed this sentiment with his usual liveliness, in a passage which I fear you will hardly recognise in the following English dress ; or perhaps I should say *dressing-gown*, for the translation is a very loose one :—

Releas'd, at last, from dread of Persia's king
 When Peace o'er Hellas wav'd her ruffled wing,—
 How fast and fair the gentler Arts arose !
 She train'd the steed : she grac'd the public shows :
 Now, taught the Comic muse to tread the stage :
 Now, bade the actor storm with Tragic rage :
 With stubborn metal wag'd a noble strife,
 And watch'd the marble struggle into life :

* Horat. *Epist.* ii. l. v. 93—102.

Or Beauty's image labour'd to recall,
 And hung, enraptur'd, on the pictur'd wall.*
 And, as a wayward, wanton child at play
 Changes its pastime with the changing day;—
 Tires of the rapture each new toy supplied,
 And flings, impatient, each new toy aside;—
 So thou, fair Hellas, in thy youth wast fain
 To take fresh flights in Fancy's bright domain:
 Range ev'ry field of Truth and Beauty o'er,
 Exhaust its treasures, and still pine for more !

The Coins† of the ancients are a class of monuments far too important to be passed over unnoticed here. They even challenge the foremost place in a gallery consecrated to Art ; and, in a public University, those claims acquire tenfold force and reality. Not that we can hope to feast our eyes upon the coins themselves,—for it would cost too many thousands to secure a collection sufficiently extensive, and sufficiently beautiful, for our purpose. A fine set of casts in sulphur is all that can be hoped for;—but these might be secured for a very insignificant sum. Classed in geographical order, with a subsidiary chronological arrangement, and disposed in flat cases about the level of the eye, so that the specimens (both obverse and reverse) might be examined in a good light through glass,—what an insight into the History, the Mythology, the Art of Sicily and Magna Græcia—Greece Proper, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt,—would be attainable by the merest tyro !—I scarcely dare trust myself on so seductive a

* “Suspendit pictâ vultum mentemque tabellâ.”

† The mention of ancient coins seems to suggest the fittest opportunity for an acknowledgment, as sincere and hearty, as I feel it must be brief. If there be any single sound view of Antiquity contained in these pages, I have derived it, consciously or unconsciously, from one of the best of living anti-quaries—my Father. The mistakes, (whatever they may be), are private property, and altogether my own.

theme: so pregnant with interest,—so important,—yet enjoying such limited popularity. Under whatever light we contemplate these beautiful little monuments, we are struck with their surpassing value and importance. The invention of coinage is contemporary with the beginning of civilised society in Greece:—the series only ends with the extinction of the Roman Empire. Throughout that long period, the history of each country is engraved on its coins;—those of each city become a fragmentary chronicle of that city. What history attests, *that* coins corroborate. Is history silent?—the coins still speak. They tell of leagues formed with distant states: they commemorate victories:* they bear witness to periods of grandeur and decay: they indicate the change of language,—the progress of colonization,—the haunts and the seats of commerce,—and the vicissitudes of empire: they preserve the memory of local worship: they exhibit ancient localities:† they present us with the portraits of emperors, tyrants, kings, queens, and other illustrious personages; so exquisite, that modern art cannot approach them: so truthful and striking, that we should recognise Alexander the Great, Seleucus, Antiochus, Ptolemy, or the Cæsars, if we could meet them, a great deal better probably than we should our own Shakspeare.—

* None perhaps more touchingly than those large brass coins struck by Vespasian and Titus, and inscribed IVDÆA CAPTA: which represent the daughter of Sion sitting mournfully on the ground beneath her palm.

† A coin of Neapolis (now *Nablous*) the ancient Sychem, or Sychar,—struck by Antoninus Pius—represents that temple on Mount Gerizim which the woman of Samaria alluded to when she said οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ὄρει προσεκύνουσιν. A copper coin of Athens represents the Theatre of Bacchus at the foot of the Parthenon.—Another represents the Acropolis itself.—These, though rare cases, are by no means solitary examples of localities *actually pictured* on coins.

Coins have a literature of their own. They may be regarded as little leaves cut out of the great volume of antiquity, consigned to the winds and storms of more than two thousand years, and at last washed up on these distant shores,—each with its indelible, unalterable record. Some present the names of forgotten cities; others establish the orthography of cities, well known indeed, but the names of which, variously written by mediæval transcribers, have perplexed the learned.* Some are interesting for their curious legends, and challenge the critical acumen of the scholar.† Many kings of Bactria,—many kings of Indo-Scythia,—unknown names, and lost as it might have seemed for ever,—have come to light only within the last ten years. A handful of coins is all that remains of a mighty dynasty!‡

Then, had Coins no other attraction, their singular beauty, the glory of the conceptions indelibly stamped upon them,—enough sometimes to make the heart ache with a sense of their loveliness!—might surely rescue them from the neglect in which they have slumbered so long.....Much injustice has been done by individuals to the different pursuits with which they are not themselves acquainted; but on no pursuit has more preposterous ridicule been heaped than on those of the Antiquary. The Philosopher flatters himself that he soars, while the

* Dr. Arnold, I think, alludes to this in three or four places, in his notes to Thucydides: e.g. iv. 75 (Καλκηδών). He was anticipated, in this practice, by Dr. Cramer, who generally inserts a notice of the ancient orthography of ancient towns, in the notes to his Geographical works.

† Take for example the inscription on a coin of Miletus, which Millingen has published in his *Sylloge of Ancient Uned. Coins*, 4to. London, 1837, p. 70, viz., ΕΓ ΔΙΔΥΜΩΝ ΙΕΡΗ.

‡ See Professor Wilson's learned and interesting work, entitled "Ariana Antiqua," 4to. London, 1841.

Antiquary creeps: the Historian, that he is dealing with great things, while the Antiquary is playing with toys: the Poet that he gathers the fruit, while the poor Antiquary puts up with the stalk and leaves: the Naturalist, that if he *be* himself a trifle, he is at least trifling with the works of Nature, while the Antiquary is trifling with the works of Man; and so of others. (As if tadpoles, and tom-tits, and cabbages were *necessarily* a more elevating subject of study than Man, and Man's ways: the cunning workmanship of his fingers: his yearnings after perfection!).—It may be that Antiquaries themselves, or rather pretended Antiquaries, have had their full share in promoting this delusion. An illegible inscription,—a rusty old sword, found by no-body-knows-whom, no-body-cares-where,—a Queen Anne's farthing,—a copper coin with nothing upon it,—a pipkin of red earthenware,* destitute of either spout or handle,—all these are deemed the peculiar property of *the Antiquary*. One hears it sometimes gravely stated that antiquaries admire things "*because they are old.*" How often must it be repeated, that nothing is to be admired but what is beautiful,—that nothing can be beautiful which is not good?—I dismiss this slight digression by appealing to the coins of Magna Græcia in support of my assertion, that ancient coins exhibit sometimes the

* Or such a thing, for example, as may be seen inserted into the wall of an Inn by the road side, near Waltham-Cross, in Hertfordshire; surmounted by the words VIA UNA.—It seems that a mansion once stood there, belonging to the Cecil family; whose motto is "*Cor unum, Via una.*" Amid the foundations of the house, a rude earthen vessel, (such as, two centuries ago, the lower orders seem to have used for beer), was discovered, along with *the latter-half* of the family-motto wrought in stone. The inference, though not quite logical, was irresistible. The allusion was evidently to Watling-street; and the Inn rejoices in the sign of "The Roman Urn" to this day.

very highest order of artistical skill; and would particularly call attention to those of Syracuse, Agrigentum, Camarina, Tarentum, Metapontum, Terina, Thurium, Heraclea in Lucania, Crotona, and Velia. Nor am I apprehensive of the result, if you will refer to the plates in Noehden's *Specimens of ancient Coins*, engraved at the suggestion of Canova, from the princely collection of that distinguished patron of the Arts,—Lord Northwick.

What then is wanting to recommend the study of this class of monuments? What additional argument need be urged to show the advantage of a set of casts to the classical student? Can any one read Thucydides without wishing to see coins of Athens and Sparta?—and *who* but will be struck with the coinage of the former city;—*who* but will be led to some curious reflexions by the absence of *all* coins of the latter?—How interesting to such a reader become the coins of the allies of either state!—those of Plataea, to cite a single example,—How *real* becomes the narrative in b. vi. c. 4, when, at a certain period in the series, the legend ceases to be *Zancle*,* and becomes *Messana* instead!—With what interest one looks at the Lydian coins after reading the first book of Herodotus!—Will the portraits of Mithradates,† of Pompey, of Julius and of Augustus Cæsar,—of Tiberius and of Germanicus,—of Cicero,—of the many illustrious ladies of Imperial Rome,—be valueless to the student of Roman history and literature?—But I must be growing tedious. Only one remark shall be added; and it shall be expressed in general language,—for the argument applies to every branch of ancient monuments, though it is by no means in a slight degree applicable to coins. They would

* See a paper on this subject by my Father, Num. Chron. vol. iii. p. 40.

† This name is invariably so spelt on coins.

deserve our best attention then, in this place, were it only because they present us with such lively *Representations of ancient Objects*. Instead of contenting ourselves with the second-hand descriptions of men who never saw the things themselves; or putting up with the representations of such miserably ill-selected specimens of antiquity as are sometimes presented to our notice, why should we not rather make it our honest ambition to contemplate the monuments themselves: to derive our notions from the fountain-head?—For this purpose, we should find copies of the subjects of ancient Vases especially valuable.—How lively a notion of a Greek warrior is derived from a Greek frieze,—or vase,—or coin: his helmet, his round shield, his offensive weapons. With regard to the second, how intelligible, for the first time, becomes the epithet *ποδήρης*: how interesting the description of its device or *ἐπίσημον*! What a commentary on countless passages in classic writers becomes the actual representation of ancient costume; of an ancient ship; and still more, of an ancient car: the *ἄντυξ*,—the *ζυγός*,—the *ρύμός*,—the *ἔστωρ*: to say nothing of the trappings of the steeds. The Panathenaic amphora which my Father found at Athens in 1813, and which has been so often published, exhibits, on its reverse, a two-horse car and its charioteer, of the sixth, or perhaps even the seventh, century before our era. Where else shall we turn for such an early representation? And, without it, how vague must our notion of the scene depicted be !..... Take domestic implements again, (if the term be allowable): the tripod,—the lyre,—the torch,—a vase,—a strigil,—a mirror,—a chair: domestic scenes, as a marriage, a hunting-party, or a feast:—public scenes, as a chariot-race, or a combat: the heads, or the statues, of ancient deities with their accessories, and the several objects sacred to

them: above all, the ancient modes of representing ancient myths.—Why, in conclusion, let me most earnestly ask; why, with all this in our reach, are such objects as unknown among us as if no relic of Antiquity had survived the stormy flight of twenty centuries? Fiercely indeed has that storm raged; and few, comparatively, are the relics which it has spared: yet, even in their ruins, most lovely are they, one and all; and, like the precious stones of earth which Plato beautifully dreamed of, as the fragments of a brighter world above us,* they speak eloquently of an intellectual creation such as we seem destined never to behold again. Christianity has lent us angels' wings: has sanctified, and therefore ennobled Art beyond all expression: has discovered a new Architectural World; and in the harmonies of Sound and Colour has conducted us into regions never explored by antiquity: but, *in her peculiar way*, Greece yet remains—it may be, must ever remain—unrivalled.....Why do we keep these treasures from ourselves? How long are we to be deprived of such high gratifications? What is to be the limit,—in the age of the individual, or the history of this place,—to which we are to deny ourselves the advantages which, for a sum too trifling to be considered, might be made available to us all?

I suppose that every one must have been occasionally impressed with the almost unsurmountable impediments which stand in the way of a complete appreciation of the classic writers. Not to mention the mystery of the idiom, — arising so frequently from the circumstance that their compositions were intended for the ear, and not for the eye: not to mention the difficulty,—perhaps the impossibility, of translating a dead language into a living one;—to

* *Phædo*, p. 110. D.

understand them *fully*, we need to have felt their faith, and used their laws, and shared their lives; or, at all events, to have lived in their land, and in their times; to have looked upon the same blue mountains and sea through the same pure atmosphere: to have been familiar with all their various sights and sounds: to have seen their faces, and heard their voices, and breathed their air, and eaten their food. Without any such associations, how darkly do we, —how dimly *must* we gaze into Antiquity through the medium of a dead language! Some such conviction as this is often forced upon us by a speech,— a chorus,— a dialogue,— the individual remarks or the reflexions of an ancient author. Still oftener, particular passages present difficulties which remind us of the disadvantages under which we labour. A few examples, selected at random, will sufficiently illustrate what is here intended.— Thucydides refers in a well-known passage* to the Athenian practice of wearing a peculiar head-dress, adorned with golden τέττιγες: and Aristophanes has several allusions to the same ancient fashion. We refer to the scholiast on both writers, and find,—διὰ τὸ μουσικόν, ἥ διὰ τὸ αὐτόχθονας εἶναι, assigned as the reason: καὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῶον γηγενές. But we have always been allowed to translate τέττιξ, *grasshopper*; and since that insect is neither “musical,” nor in any particular sense “indigenous,” the passages in question are, I suppose, not generally understood: or rather, the reasons assigned by the scholiast do not appear quite satisfactory. But every Athenian must have been familiar with the allusion, and felt its appositeness. The large winged insect which the Greeks called τέττιξ, — the Latins *cicada*, — and the modern Italians *cigala*, (but for which we have no name), when it

* B. i. c. 6.

escapes from the chrysalis, which was deposited in the ground, flies up with tuneful wings, *out of the earth* under the very feet of the traveller,—the offspring, as it would indeed seem, of the soil. What fitter type could have been selected of a race who deemed themselves *αὐτόχθονες*?... Æschylus calls the misery which war inflicts—*δίλογχον ἄτην*. These two *λόγchai* are truly enumerated by the commentators, viz. public and private woe. But who does not perceive that this is only half the explanation which the phrase requires? The very best commentary on the passage is the ancient representation of a Greek warrior,—armed with *two spears*. This, it will be felt, makes the metaphor intelligible in a moment. Æschylus would never have said *τῷ δίλογχον*..... The *θούριος ὄρνις* of the same poet, Ag. 112; and the *εὐπτερον ὄρνιν* of Sophocles, Œd. Tyr. 175, would, in like manner, be best illustrated from monuments: nor would any youth, who had once been shown the representation alluded to, again think of translating the latter phrase, “*a well-fledged hen*.”..... A multitude of similar examples might perhaps be recollected, if it were worth while. Aristophanes, in particular, is full of allusions which we cannot explain.* It will be perceived that the exquisite chorus in the Œdipus Coloneus already quoted, should, *in order to be understood*, be read with the recollection in our hearts that the Parthenon over-hung the Theatre of Bacchus where the play was performed:—that its Pediment exhibited the theme of the poet’s song executed in Pentelic marble by Phidias:—and that a single gesture of the Coryphæus would have sufficed to

* In a single play of his, how many occur! In the Knights, for example, the following lines strike one as all requiring further elucidation — v.630: 815-6: 901: 1103: 1180: 1175-6: 1270-1, etc.

render all the poet's meaning clear: (though this, as we all remember, was not at all necessary before an audience who, when they heard their own praises, underwent such lively excitement, that as their fellow-townsmen and satirist told them to their faces, they could "*hardly keep their seats*,"—ἐπ' ἄκρων τῶν πυργιδίων ἐκάθησθε).* Then, to all this we must add the balmy air,—the bright lights and shadows,—the temple itself kindling in the morning sunshine,—and the distant sight of Salamis and the sea;—and we seem to have a faint glimpse, at least, of what we ought to experience, in order to understand what an Athenian felt,—what the poet of Colonus intended that his hearers should feel. Now, to say nothing of the Stygian darkness which, in addition, hangs over the pronunciation of Greek poetry, the lost charm of its metre, and of its musical and orchestric accompaniment,—do we not at once perceive how thick a veil hangs between a single chorus and ourselves? How dim, and vague, at best, our notions of Antiquity must be?—Once more then, we shall surely feel that no legitimate method of dispelling that gloom is to be neglected: and it is hoped that what has been urged will suffice to show that the contemplation of ancient Monuments themselves,—or faithful copies of them,—is at once the simplest and the most valuable.

Enough has now been said about *Form*;—too much perhaps: and yet I have carefully abstained from any theoretical views of ancient Art; or from looking deeper into its analogies than the matter in hand seemed to warrant. This may be reserved for some more convenient opportunity; when further reading and observation

* Aristoph. *Acharn.* v. 638.

has enabled me to systematise opinions only disconnectedly held at present; and to trace more distinctly the complicated outline by which the works of Antiquity—using that term in its very widest sense—are circumscribed:—provided always that more precious claims should not make such an occupation unlawful; provided too that I am not anticipated by some more able pen.*—On the subject of *Colour*, no less than on the subject of *Form*, “if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all on your worship;” but a salutary check shall be imposed. As already remarked, I have spoken of Art practically, not theoretically; and of the same character shall be the remarks which remain to be offered. I leave that other view of these matters,—that, namely, which I believe has been called the philosophy (or, as others have preferred to call it, the science) of Art, to those who have the taste and the ability for such investigations. In other words, I abstain from beginning with such inquiries as that concerning the abstract principles of Beauty; but, in humble imitation of some illustrious examples which shall be nameless, placing myself at the other end of the scale of intelligence,—and hoping, in time, to arrive at the Universal by means of the Particular,—with the monuments before me, I desire to look up to the Beautiful through and from them; and to consider what advantages their study seems calculated to confer.

You will, I am sure, excuse me, if I here venture to offer an opinion, differing from that which,—till you

* I find with pleasure that something of the kind is contemplated by Charles Newton, Esq., of Christ-Church,—now of the British Museum,—one of the few friends with whom, in discussing these subjects, I have found on the whole a singular coincidence of sentiment and general opinion.

did me the favour to explain your meaning more fully,—I conceived you yourself held on this subject; namely, that it is wholly impracticable to convey a knowledge of the arts of Sculpture and Painting on synthetic principles. In this respect, these arts seem to differ in some degree from the sister art, Music: and this, perhaps, is the reason why the last named has, in all ages except the present, been selected as an integral part of an academical course,—namely, because it admitted of something like scientific teaching: because, (as you have yourself pointed out from Aristotle), “the εἶδη τοῦ καλοῦ,—in other words the necessary conditions of art, τάξις, καὶ συμμετρία, καὶ τὸ ὀρισμένον,”—are distinctly recognisable in it. That the mysteries of Form and Colour are referable to certain fixed laws, and that the types of æsthetic Beauty are as immutable in their nature as the ἀρχαὶ of morals themselves,—*I make no manner of doubt*. But, whatever the ‘line of beauty’ may be, it has never been discovered: and the theory of Colour, even if there exist one worthy of being scientifically taught, (of which I humbly confess myself profoundly ignorant), must belong, one should think, rather to the science of Optics, than to the study of Art. It is feared that to one predisposed to the abstract and *à priori* investigation of such questions, all that has been here written must have a very *material* air, and be singularly distasteful: but, deeply impressed with the soundness of my position, I am bold to think that, fairly considered, its general correctness will be admitted. Let me hope, at all events, that I am not misunderstood to speak slightly of that confessedly higher view of the subject which I judge that you are disposed to take,—as well from the conversation you have occasionally favoured me with on such topics, as from the thoughtful paper

you read before the Ashmolean Society “ On Education in the Principles of Art.” It is, of course, a matter of deep wonder to find that the harmonies of Colour, and the harmonies of Sound, depend on “ contemporaneous vibrations, addressed in the one case to the sense of sight, and in the other to the sense of hearing.” Very remarkable, too, is the coincidence you point out in the absolutely perfect concords, and the primitive forms of colours: namely, that they are *but three*. To find the mystery of Trinity in Unity thus reflected on the creatures of GOD must ever be delightful, and deeply affecting to a well constituted mind; and I feel grateful for being reminded of any instance of it. The Atomic Theory has long since reduced Chemistry to a science of Number; and the progress of experiment will probably extend the claims of Number to be a kind of *summum genus*: so that Philosophy, in its old age, seems to be only verifying the guesses of its infancy, under Pythagoras. All these, I grant, are marvels, and well deserving study and attention: but I do not see how, by such abstract investigations, we shall make any approximation to the great and definite end, which I am nevertheless well persuaded we both equally have in view.

We shall perhaps be told, then, that if these things cannot be thus taught, they are not fit subjects for the attention of an University: but such a sweeping denunciation is not to be tolerated, and may be replied to in several ways. First,—though it should prove impracticable to teach them synthetically, it does not therefore follow that they cannot be taught at all. Next,—even if they defied all systematic teaching, it would not therefore follow that they should labour under utter neglect: the *καλὸν* may be worth contemplating for its own sake; and, be it remembered, that the organ which makes us

acquainted with it, is that organ which “converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyment.”* Further,—whatever our rulers may see fit to decide in this place, the plain matter of fact is, that a man no sooner leaves Oxford, than he inevitably finds himself thrown, day after day, among these forms of real or apparent beauty. No less if he stays at home, than if he goes abroad,—whether he understands the subject, or whether he does not,—is he called upon to express an opinion ; and very often to make his election. A man may as well attempt to escape from the responsibility of Moral action as from the exercise of his Taste. He is assailed, wherever he turns, and is daily called upon *to act*: the alternative in every case being between acting *right* and acting *wrong*. Finally, as you have yourself most truly remarked, “where different Arts appear to be entirely distinct from each other, *they are still held together*, if not by relations of direct resemblance, yet *by certain laws of analogy*”:—or, as some one else has said,—“Etenim omnes artes quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione quâdam inter se continentur”:—and it will follow that the cultivation of one, indirectly prepares the heart for the reception of another; or rather, ensures an unconscious acquaintance with all the rest: just as in the Aristotelian system of Ethics, the possession of *φρόνησις* ensures the possession of *all* virtue. Hence the ancients fabled the Arts to be Sisters,—by wedding one of whom, you find yourself brought into close relation with all the others. And, for our present purpose, it seems worth adding to your own remark this further

* Addison. *Spectator*, No. 411.

one,—namely, that Beauty is one and the same everywhere; though, from the nature of the case, it assumes innumerable different aspects: and therefore, to speak practically, that a soul which has once imbibed a thorough sense of what is beautiful in any one department, will be furnished with a faculty which will serve as a guide in every unforeseen occasion; and enable a person to decide rightly, *on the whole*, in every case that may happen to present itself, however anomalous it may appear to be. For there *is* a Right and a Wrong in every thing; there is harmony or rhythm, though it may defy analysis, even in the furniture of a room,—the hanging of a picture,—the proportions of a chalice,—the arrangement of a garden. Such questions seem to occupy the same kind of relation to Art, which cases of Casuistry occupy towards Morals. A person learned in such subjects could give off-hand a great many curious examples, or rather proofs, of the wonderful chain which binds the Fine Arts together, and links the small with the great. It occurs to me that Phidias, who made the chryselephantine statue of Minerva,—the wonder and admiration of the ancient world,—thought it no indignity to execute a fly; or a fish; so natural, that it was said of it, “Give it water, and it will swim.” A curious instance of his mechanical ingenuity is also recorded.—Michael Angelo, equally great in Sculpture and in Painting, built St. Peter’s, fortified Florence, and wrote poetry.—Raphael’s inexhaustible genius condescended to the embellishment of the walls of the Vatican with merely ornamental details.—Leonardo da Vinci was as famous for his knowledge of Architecture and Sculpture, as for his skill in Painting: he was celebrated too as a musician, mathematician, and engineer; and by a marvellous instinct, anticipated the

truths which it was reserved for a later age to establish. —Petrarch was one of the earliest collectors of ancient coins.—“The Tuscan artist,” (he who viewed the moon “through optick glass,”) dwells on his high obligations to Ariosto, whose works he perused constantly; and was himself a poet and a critic.*—Some time since, I happened to meet with a most exquisite episcopal seal,—that of Richard de Bury, bishop of Durham in the reign of Edward III. I felt sure that it could have been no common person who had left such a memorial of his taste, in so small a particular; and on inquiry, it proved that this bishop had been Tutor to the King, Lord Chancellor of England, and Envoy to the French capital and the Papal Court: that he was the father of English book collectors, and had been the friend of Petrarch. He bequeathed his books to the University of Oxford, and I am told that a few are still preserved in Trinity College library.—Holbein portrayed the nobility of Henry VIII.’s court, and designed their jewellery. He also painted the ceiling of the Chapel Royal, St. James’s.—The residence of Rubens was in itself a picture.—To cite a living instance,—all who have been made welcome in the classic residence of the author of the Pleasures of Memory, remember how a taste for the finest of the fine Arts seems to have introduced all the rest: till the impress of a correct taste is discernible in the minutest decorations of that beautiful dwelling.—When these pages meet the eye of my indulgent friend, W. R. Hamilton, Esq.,

* For this illustration, and two or three similar remarks in the beginning of this letter, I am indebted to my dear friend, the Rev. C. P. Chretien, of Oriel. The obligations which I lie under to him for his patient teaching, and kind assistance in my studies, I am glad of any opportunity to acknowledge.

I trust he will not be displeased with the liberty I take in mentioning his name in connexion with this subject. Surrounded by many a specimen of what is rare and beautiful in art, he beholds the legitimate fruits of his varied and elegant scholarship reflected on all that meets his eye. His friends will not easily forget the classical effect of the Athenian frieze which surrounds his library at Chelsea.—To judge from the well known character by the Rev. Mr. Temple, inserted in Mason's Life of Gray, the author of the "Elegy" seems to have been a singularly apposite illustration of my meaning, in the last century. But I pass on to the subject more immediately before us.

Painting then, with whatever success the Ancients may have flattered themselves that they cultivated it, seems to be an Art of Christian growth: and I am inclined to believe that, by those who have reflected on the matter attentively, this will not be thought a rash assertion. With the exception of the paintings discovered at Pompeii and Herculaneum,—which are not ancient enough to gainsay our present position; nor (as far as I can discover) sufficiently excellent either,—it may be said that *no* ancient paintings have come down to us: we can therefore only reason on the subject from the existing evidence, for and against the claims of antiquity, which is within our reach.—And first, it is to be admitted that we have numerous extant specimens of ancient *colouring*. Fictile vases exhibit drapery of yellow, pinkish red, and blue: white bodies (when females are intended), and yellow hair, which in the more finished specimens has not unfrequently been gilded: and perhaps another colour (though I never saw an instance of it), besides black, and the brownish red colour of the clay itself. *Colouring*, how-

ever, and *Painting*, it need scarcely be observed, are distinct things. The former seems a merely mechanical,—the latter, a very exalted and intellectual Art. The one must be coæval with the first ages of mankind: the other implies a very high degree of refinement and civilization.

Neither of these two last-named conditions were certainly wanting in ancient Greece: still, as we all know, man is slow to invent; and without some direct evidence to the contrary, it seems just as unlikely that *Painting*, in the modern sense of the word, was known to the ancients, as that *Music* was. Musical notes indeed they knew. The elementary principles of the science of harmony, with their usual sagacity, they discovered. But that complicated mystery which *Christianity* sought and found for its utterance,—of *this* we do believe they knew absolutely nothing. To be brief, it may be presumed that the worlds in which Raphael and Handel “lived, and moved, and had their being,” were every bit as unknown to the ancients as America or New Holland were.—The stories we read of Apelles and Protogenes, Parasius and Zeuxis, and the like, all go to support this position. They corroborate the proofs already existing in metal, in marble, and in clay, that they were first-rate artists indeed; perfect masters of *Design*; and that they were well acquainted with Colour: but by nothing that one reads is one induced to think very highly of their proficiency in *Painting*. A beautiful anecdote which has been recorded by Pliny, indicates an extraordinary sense of beauty of *form*; but three fleeting lines intersecting one another on a painter’s tablet can have had nothing to do with the Art by which Titian became immortal. And again, every one must feel that many of the proofs urged in support of the pretensions of the ancients, are such as to argue an almost infantine

state of Art. A child five years old might paint cherries which a bird would peck at. Any ingenious mechanic could represent a curtain in such a manner as to deceive: and I suppose a horse would be just as likely to neigh at a flagrant sign-post effigy of one of his own species,* as if the animal had been painted by Landseer himself.

This opinion on an interesting subject,—briefly expressed, but not hastily adopted,—I have ventured to offer; chiefly to explain why, in speaking of Painting, I pass at once to the Italian school, and would be understood to take my stand there, in the very few remarks I desire in conclusion to offer. Is it then, I would ask, too much to hope that, in time, we may see the walls of some building in Oxford adorned with faithful *copies* of the grandest Pictures in the world? and might we not hope that by some act of private munificence we should hereafter see a gallery hung with *original* works of some of the great Masters? In the meantime, surely some of the best prints of those pictures might be procured,—were it only such a collection as the fine taste of an individual member of this University has formed for his own gratification and that of his friends;—I allude, of course, to Mr. Johnson, of the Observatory. I have also been informed that the Rector of Lincoln College is happy in the possession of a similar treasure. The original drawings of Raphael and Michael Angelo, at all events, we possess; and I suppose are all burning to behold. Surely, if pictures are to charm us hereafter, they should begin to charm us now. If, on leaving the University, a man is expected to know a Raphael from a Rubens,—a Guido from a Reynolds,—it is surely fair to let him see a specimen of

* See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* b. xxxv. c. 10. The whole chapter is exceedingly entertaining and worth reading.

those great masters,— or at least of their *manner*,—before-hand. No one can study the works of Raphael without improvement: no one can understand them without study. They are sure to kindle the fancy,—to soften the heart,—to exalt and purify the imagination,—to mature the judgment: and the rudiments of a Taste for these things must be acquired early; or, in nine cases out of ten, it can never be acquired at all. How many men are there, in consequence, who go forth from this place as ignorant of the first principles, the very alphabet (so to speak) of Art, as of Chinese. How many men,—heirs to high titles or large fortunes; or destined, on their leaving college, for the enjoyment of noble opportunities,—who nevertheless miss those opportunities,—abuse those great gifts: some, brutally indifferent on the subject of Art: others, absurdly lavish on objects undeserving of their attention; and then, unwilling to learn, or incapable of being taught the egregious folly they have committed, and the worthlessness of their possessions: and in the case of such as were destined for better things, how dimly and vaguely, (like men groping in the dark), does one sometimes see men feeling their way, and only late in life finding it; after many abortive attempts, and after they have purchased their experience at a price which would have stocked a gallery!

Oxford cannot, of course, be converted into a School of Taste. Nothing is more remote from my wishes than that it should ever become so. We are not yet, I fear, in a condition even to hear Lectures delivered on Art; but it is high time that some preliminary steps should be taken towards such an end: and the amount of intelligence, and rank, and opulence collected with in these walls, seems to call imperatively for some endeavour to promote an acquaintance with those works which must ever be re-

ferred to as the models, and appealed to as the standards of excellence—*πολυχρόνιον γὰρ τὸ καλόν*. I have endeavoured in the preceding pages to explain how the contemplation of such objects would go hand in hand with the studies peculiar to an University education: but even were this wholly problematical, it cannot be thought strange that we should desire to be brought into sympathy with the Sublime and Beautiful for its *own* sake. If the ancients erected a Temple to the Charities of Life in the public way,* in order that men might be perpetually reminded of their social relationship,—(somewhat, I suppose, as Churches bearing the names of saintly holiness are calculated to suggest heavenly thoughts amid the strife and turmoil of politics or trade),—surely we might construct such a Gallery as we have been here describing, in the yet more reasonable hope that the sublimest efforts of Genius would occasionally awaken some sympathy, even where they failed to stimulate inquiry, or to kindle emulation.

But, in addition to all these considerations, it is observable that in every department, if men are not assisted and guided by those whose position and acquirements qualify them to assist and guide, they will infallibly assist one another and guide themselves. We have but to look around us to be convinced that there exists in this place a strong *yearning for Art*: which only wants *direction*, in order that it may be made available for a high purpose. These indications, however, such as they are, are indications of an untutored taste. The incongruities one daily witnesses are a proof of this; and it seems no unfair supposition that *the mind* of the individual is to be seen reflected in the apartment he inhabits. In other words

* Aristot. *Eth. Nic.* v. 5, 7.—(A learned Friend reminds me that the Stagyrte uses *χάρις* here in an ambiguous sense.)

that the state of a room and the style of its decorations is an indication of the condition of the *intellectual* chamber of its occupant.—That a young man, supremely enamoured of the excitement of the chase, should hang his hunting-whip or a pair of spurs over his mantel-piece, and feast his eyes on a gaudy coloured print of Reynard *in extremis*,—that “Breaking cover,”—“Leaping a fence,”—and “Tally ho!”—should send *him* into exstasies, may provoke a smile, but should not create surprise. I cannot believe, however, that were a little attention bestowed on the subject now before us,—were ever so little pains taken to cultivate and improve men’s tastes,—I cannot suppose that such ill-selected specimens of Art as one sometimes sees, would be so eagerly sought after: or that so incongruous an association of the Sublime and the Ridiculous as some of us may have witnessed in our time, would be so generally endured. How often have we seen a subject of awful sublimity,—as the last Supper,—the Crucifixion,—or the Descent from the Cross,—side by side with—what I shrink from naming in the same paragraph: something not absolutely bad in itself, perhaps; but which seems very bad indeed when contrasted with what is so unspeakably holy. It is surely not too much to hope that a healthier tone of feeling might thus be insensibly imparted; and, as a necessary consequence, that the unworthy, tasteless, and I may add, extravagant, productions of the day would gradually become loathed like unwholesome food: while we should see them silently supplanted by such noble compositions as the fine taste of Dr. Hope—(by a recent publication, which should be in every one’s hands,)—has placed within the reach of the poorest student in Oxford. The boast which Pericles put into the mouths of his countrymen,—that “they indulged

their passion for the beautiful, with economy,"*—might with far greater truth† be ours. We should, at all events, soon discover that expensiveness is no necessary ingredient in Beauty: but that this source of enjoyment,—the purest, next to the exercise of Moral Virtue,—is no less attainable by us all.

And thus I bring this long letter to a close;—glad of any opportunity to subscribe myself, with sincere respect,

My dear Mr. Greswell,

Your much obliged and most affectionate

Friend and Pupil,

JOHN WILLIAM BURGON.

WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD,

DECEMBER, 1845.

* Φιλοκαλοῦμεν γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας. Thucyd. ii. 40.

† A learned friend, and one who combines profound scholarship with the highest antiquarian feeling, has some remarks on this subject too interesting to be omitted. He is speaking of the very monuments to which Pericles alludes.—“That which chiefly excites our wonder in these beautiful works of sculpture is, that their execution is such as in almost every part to admit of minute inspection, although the nearest of them were not seen at a smaller distance than forty feet. We cannot have a stronger proof that considerations of economy entered very little into the calculations of Pericles, and that the Athenian artists aimed at nothing short of perfection in their productions, and at glory for their highest reward. Having formed the conception of a finished and perfect work, Phidias and his scholars could not be contented with any thing short of its execution. Satisfied with its being for a short time submitted to the near inspection of the public, they thought it could receive no greater honour than that of contributing to adorn the temple of the protecting goddess, of being consigned to her care, and of becoming the object of a small share of the veneration paid to her.” (Col. Leake’s “Athens and Demi,” vol. i. p. 337).—These would have been the men to build a Cathedral!

POSTSCRIPT.

P. S.—In addition to the circumstance recorded in the note to page 5, it should perhaps be stated that since these pages were written, my attention has been called to the fact that casts of several of the wished-for statues, already exist in the Taylor Gallery. Let me remark therefore that these are so few, and they are disposed in such a way, that nothing which has been here urged is in the least degree invalidated by the circumstance. The portions of the Panathenaïc and Phigaleian friezes which are inserted in the wall *just below the ceiling*, however tastefully introduced, and admirable in an *architectural* point of view, are not calculated, at that elevation, to answer the requirements of a Student of Art.

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